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FOOTPRINTS OF THE SON OF MAN

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BEING EIGHTY PORTIONS FOR PRIVATE
STUDY, FAMILY READING, AND
INSTRUCTIONS IN CHURCH

BY

HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D.

CANON OF ELY, EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF ELY,
PRINCIPAL OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, AND
SOMETIME FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE LATE BISHOP OF ELY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

From the Jordan to the Mount of Transfiguration

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Introduction.

THE following addresses were delivered in substance on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Early Matins in S. Catherine's Chapel within Ely Cathedral. Having myself heard many of them with great interest and profit, I advised their publication, because they seemed likely to be useful in the private study of Holy Scripture, and to be especially fitted for family reading in households consisting of thoughtful and educated persons.

But I had a further reason for urging the publication of these addresses, in that they appeared to recognise a need which has been long felt, I believe, by devout members of many congregations—the need of regular instruction in Holy Scripture,—and to supply a good example of the way in which such need might be met by the Parochial Clergy.

There is probably no Branch of the Catholic Church in which more Sermons are preached than in the Anglican Communion; there is perhaps also no Branch of it in which there is less didactic exposition of the sacred text; less explanatory teaching as to the Constitution and Ordinances of the Church. The result is that the majority of ordinary Church people, when called upon to defend their own system, know less about it than the members of any other religious body. The sermons preached to our congregations are almost exclusively hortatory. It may be questioned whether the constant listening to addresses whose sole object is to awaken the conscience and move the affections, does not tend in some degree to defeat its own object. At any rate this kind of preaching requires, I am persuaded, to be supplemented by careful and regular expository teaching. Something analogous to this is adopted in the conduct of those Parochial Missions which are becoming familiar amongst us. The Mission Sermon is usually followed by the simpler and more direct "Instruc-

tion;" and these Instructions have in many places been that part of the Mission which has left the most abiding results. In a similar way it appears to me that the usual Sunday Sermon requires to be varied by addresses of a less rhetorical and more didactic character, which may lead to a better understanding of the Bible and the Prayer-Book.

Where there is a Daily Service it would, I feel assured, be very profitable if upon the Wednesday and Friday the Parish Priest were to read with his people short portions of some book of Holy Scripture with a brief *explanatory* comment.

When, as is the custom in so many Churches, there is only one Week-day Evening Service, such a systematic reading and exposition of a Gospel would, in my opinion, be more useful to the people, and less burdensome to the Parish Priest, than an additional sermon. In those places where there are no Week-day Services (although I am bound to say that, with the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer daily throughout the Year meeting us on the first page of the

Prayer-Book, *no* Church ought to be shut up from Sunday to Sunday) it might, I think, be desirable to make the Sunday Morning Sermon an expository Address or Instruction, reserving the Sermon proper for the afternoon or evening service.

The addresses now published may, it is hoped, lead to a more general adoption of this practice of Scripture Exposition in Church.

I heartily commend them to the Clergy of my Diocese for use in their Churches. In some they may be read exactly as they are printed. In others, they may be expanded or modified according to the character of the congregation.

To the younger Clergy especially they will be suggestive of the way in which other books of the New Testament may be treated, with the same profit to themselves and their people, which has, I believe, attended this attempt to read with an intelligent congregation the Gospel of S. Mark.

J. R. ELIENS.

PALACE, ELY,
All Saints' Day 1884.

The Author's Preface.

THE Bishop of Ely has explained in the Introduction the main object which I have had in view in publishing these volumes on S. Mark's Gospel. I have long felt that in an age when purely "subjective" and hortatory preaching has become so popular, there is danger of the Church forgetting that she has an authoritative commission to teach as well as to admonish—not only to point out the way of salvation (though of necessity this must always be her highest duty), but also to make the Sacred History intellectually as well as spiritually edifying. In days when works of secular instruction are made so attractive, it seems most desirable not to lose sight of the fact that the Bible is a storehouse for the literary student, as well as a guide to eternal life.

Whenever it has been my privilege to give addresses at the early Cathedral Service on week-days, I have endeavoured, according to my ability, to offer to the congregation instruction rather than exhortation; at the same time I have sought to maintain their religious character by briefly suggesting at the close, in what way the immediate subject may be practically applied, leaving the fuller consideration for subsequent meditation in private.

After systematically going through a portion of S. Mark in this way, the Bishop, who was usually present at these services, desired me to commit the addresses to writing, and prepare them for publication, to further the object which his Introduction shows that he has so closely at heart. I would that the result of my labours were more worthy of his *imprimatur*, and better calculated to illustrate the principles which he seeks to establish.

For the manifold writings, both ancient and

modern, to which I am indebted, I must direct the reader to the marginal references, and the notes which are subjoined to the several "portions." I have, I trust, as a rule acknowledged any obligation that seemed to call for acknowledgment.

The frequent reference to the Talmud and Mishnah will show that many illustrations have been taken from Hebrew Literature. This happily is becoming an attractive source of information to all students of the Gospel History; and we would fain believe that the day is forever closed when "Jews refused to teach those who were not of their faith," and when, almost worse still, too many Churchmen "desired nothing better than the entire suppression of Jewish learning." In this branch of my studies I, in common with many of this generation at Cambridge, owe a large debt of gratitude for the self-denying labours of a Tutor, the Rev. P. H. Mason, who almost single-handed kept alive the

study of Hebrew in the University. For special assistance in preparing this book, I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Schiller-Szinessy, the Reader in Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature at Cambridge. He has been ready at all times to place his copious stores of Jewish knowledge at my service; I have never applied to him for information without obtaining all that I required. Almost all the passages quoted from Hebrew authorities in the following pages, I have read with him in the originals, and we have verified together every reference. I trust therefore that the Jewish information, as far as it goes, will be accepted with confidence.

Two friends, the Archdeacon of Sudbury, and one of my brother chaplains, the Rev. H. F. St. John of Dinmore, have also kindly undertaken to revise the proof-sheets, and I am indebted to them for many suggested improvements made in the course of their revision.

The troublesome and usually uninteresting

task of compiling an Index has been converted into a labour of love in the hands of my eldest daughter. I believe it will be found very fairly exhaustive, and will largely contribute to the convenience of the reader.

No one can realise more strongly than myself how open to criticism these pages are. I have probably aimed at far too much in attempting to adapt them to the threefold purpose stated on the Title-page. I cannot but think that they will be found useful for private study and for family reading; but I dare not feel confident that they will answer the main end for which they have been written, and awaken in the Clergy a desire to cultivate more largely the office of "teaching," which can only be neglected with harm and loss to the Church. If they fail, I shall still be able to look back to many hours of delightful, and, I hope, not unprofitable, study of the Life of Him "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." I pray

that they may meet with acceptance only in proportion as they tend to the best interests of the Church, and the greater glory of God.

H. M. L.

COLLEGE, ELY,
The Feast of All Saints, 1884.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

	CH.	VER.	PAGE
I. Characteristics of S. Mark's Gospel,			
S. MARK	i.	I	■
II. The Preaching of the Baptist, . . .	i.	2-6	9
III. The Baptism of Jesus, . . .	i.	7-11	16
IV. Our Lord's Temptation, . . .	i.	12-13	23
V. The Call of the Apostles, . . .	i.	14-20	31
VI. The Synagogue at Capernaum, . . .	i.	21-28	39
VII. S. Peter's Wife's Mother, . . .	i.	29-35	48
VIII. The Leper Cleansed, . . .	i.	36-45	55
IX. The Paralytic Cured, . . .	ii.	1-12	62
X. The Call of Levi, . . .	ii.	13-17	70
XI. The Principle of Fasting, . . .	ii.	18-22	77
XII. The Disciples in the Corn-fields, . . .	ii.	23-28	84
XIII. The Withered Hand, . . .	iii.	1-6	91
XIV. The Ordination of the Twelve, . . .	iii.	7-19	99

	CH.	VER.	PAGE
XV. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,			
	S. MARK	iii. 20-30	108
XVI. The Lord's Brethren, . . .	iii.	31-35	116
XVII. The Parable of the Sower, . . .	iv.	1-12	125
XVIII. The Parable of the Sower			
explained, . . .	iv.	13-25	133
XIX. The Gradual Growth of the Seed,	iv.	26-29	140
XX. The Parable of the Mustard-Seed,	iv.	30-34	148
XXI. The Stilling of the Storm, . . .	iv.	35-41	156
XXII. The Demoniacs of Gadara, . . .	v.	1-10	164
XXIII. The Herd of Swine destroyed,	v.	11-20	173
XXIV. The Raising of Jairus'			
Daughter, . . .	v.	21-24, 35-43	181
XXV. The Woman with an Issue of			
Blood, . . .	v.	25-34	190
XXVI. The Carpenter at Nazareth, . . .	vi.	1-6	198
XXVII. The Mission of the Twelve, . . .	vi.	7-13	206
XXVIII. Herodias and her Daughter, . . .	vi.	14-29	214
XXIX. The Feeding of the Five Thou-			
sand, . . .	vi.	30-44	223

*Table of Contents.*xxi

	CH.	VER.	PAGE
XXX. Walking upon the Sea,	S. MARK	vi. 45-52	233
XXXI. Tradition of the Elders,	vi.	53-56, vii. 1-8	241
XXXII. Further Traditionalism,	. . .	vii. 9-23	250
XXXIII. The Syrophenician Woman,	. . .	vii. 24-30	258
XXXIV. The Deaf Man with Stam- mering Tongue,	. . .	vii. 31-37	266
XXXV. The Feeding of the Four Thousand,	. . .	viii. 1-9	273
XXXVI. The Demand for a Sign,	. . .	viii. 10-21	281
XXXVII. The Blind Man at Bethsaida,	viii.	22-26	287
XXXVIII. S. Peter's great Confession,	viii.	27-33	293
XXXIX. Bearing the Cross,	. . .	viii. 34-38	301

VOL. I.

*FROM THE JORDAN TO THE MOUNT OF
TRANSFIGURATION.*

I.

Characteristics of S. Mark's Gospel.

S. MARK I. I.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

THE authority upon which the Gospel Histories are based is a subject of special attraction and interest. This is not because it has been assailed by hostile critics, for by far the majority of Christians are ready to accept the united testimony of the early Fathers and Doctors, and the decrees of the Church assembled in Council. But most men feel that, without surrendering in any degree their deference to antiquity, they have a right to work out for themselves the arguments upon which the several Gospels were admitted into the Canon of Scripture.

Now, touching the veracity of the first and the last, there could never have been any doubt from the moment that their authorship was admitted. S. Matthew and S. John had been eye-witnesses from the beginning to the end, and they were of the

S. Irenæus,
contr. Hær.
iii. 1.
Eusebius,
Hist. Eccl.
iii. 25.
Origen, qu. in
Euseb. vi. 25.
S. Hieronym.
Ep. ad
Paulinum.
S. Augustine,
de Doctr.
Chr. ii. 8.
Canon lix. of
Laodicea.
Can. xlvii. of
Carthage.

S. John
xiv. 25, 26;
xvi. 13.

number of those to whom a promise was given of supernatural direction and help in recalling forgotten facts. The other two, though written by men who were neither companions of Jesus nor heirs of the same promise, were indirectly influenced to a large extent, by those who were so privileged.

S. Luke
i. 2, 3.

S. Luke, without claiming to have witnessed our Lord's life, tells us that he had made it a subject of deep research, and followed with careful attention what the Apostles had told him. Furthermore, he was generally believed to have written under the guidance of S. Paul,¹ who was placed on a level of authority with the Twelve through visions and revelation.

S. Iren. iii. 1.
Tertullian,
contr. Marc.
iv. 5.
Euseb. iii. 4.

S. Mark was even more largely influenced, and that, by the very chief of the Apostles. The tie that bound him first to S. Peter was one of spiritual sonship. Converted probably by what he heard in his mother's house from the Apostle's lips, he continued in after times, with certain interruptions of longer or shorter duration, to sit at his feet and receive his teaching upon Sacred History. There is an unbroken testimony from the earliest age to his having filled the office of "interpreter" to S. Peter. The expression, it is true, admits of various shades of meaning, but can hardly imply less than that he

1 S. Pet.
v. 13.
Acts xii. 12.

Papias, qu. in
Euseb. iii. 39.
S. Iren. iii. 1.
S. Hieron. ad
Hedib. xi.

was associated with him in literary work, and became the exponent of his mind. This would supply to the Evangelist much that he missed from not being an "eye-witness and minister of the word." This influence may be traced in the following manner. S. Mark himself, except on rare occasions,² could not have been in our Lord's company, and yet many of the scenes described in his Gospel betray the hand of an eye-witness. It will suffice to notice a few examples. There is first the oft-recurring "immediately,"³ or one of its equivalents, bespeaking the presence of the writer. There are unimportant details which would catch at once the eye of a spectator:—The paralytic was "borne by four" men. "They took him even as he was." "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on the pillow." "Neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf." They "sit down by companies upon the green grass." "They found the colt tied at the door without, at a place where two ways met." "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." "He commanded that something should be given her to eat." Added to all these are the numerous references to the expression of our Lord's countenance upon divers occasions. Now it will be

Euseb. iii. 39.
S. Chrysost.
in Marc.
xiv. 51.

S. Mark ii. 3.
iv. 36, 38.

viii. 14.

vi. 39.

xi. 4.

ix. 3.

v. 43.

observed that some of these details belong to scenes where only the chosen Three were present; and that of these S. Peter was the source of the information admits of little doubt when other circumstances are considered. Great prominence is given throughout to his faults and failings, while much that redounds to his credit is carefully suppressed. For instance, S. Mark records our Lord's severe rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," but passes over the splendid eulogy that preceded: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Again, it is surely not accidental that he mentions in the account of the Apostle's denial the two warnings given by the two cock-crowings. It was an aggravation of his guilt that he should have fallen in the face of a double hindrance.

S. Matt.
xvi. 18.

S. Mark
xiv. 30, 72.

xiv. 54.

One more testimony to Petrine influence is found in the scene in the courtyard of the High Priest's palace. All the Evangelists speak of S. Peter being with the servants; S. John adds that he warmed himself; but S. Mark and S. Luke⁴ preserve a very significant detail, the meaning of which is lost in the English version, "at the fire." It is rather "with his face to the light." The circumstance was well remembered by S. Peter as that which most probably led the bystanders to recognise and detect him.

All this affords convincing proof of what the Fathers have handed down, and satisfies us as to the source of the Evangelist's authority for what he wrote.

Now it is worth while to discover the object which the writer kept mainly in view. In the mystic pages of Ezekiel there is a wonderful vision of "four living creatures,"—a man, a lion, an ox, ^{Ezek. i. 10;} and an eagle. They were interpreted in early ^{x. 14.} Christian times as typical of the four Gospels,⁵ which represent the Humanity, the Royalty, the Priesthood, and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. But there has been considerable diversity in the appropriation of the several emblems, mainly, however, in respect of the first two. S. Augustine had no hesitation in assigning the Lion to S. Matthew and the man to S. Mark; but S. Jerome with a singular want of discernment adopted the reverse. Then Christian Art came in and indorsed the view of the latter. The building of the great Cathedral in the Piazza at Venice,⁶ with which S. Mark's name is indissolubly linked, and the adoption of "the Lion of S. Mark" as its crest by the Venetian Senate, stereotyped the mistake for centuries.

Jameson,
Sacr. and
Legend.
Art. i. 132-
143.

We pass by the manifold marks of Royalty⁷ which may be found in the first Gospel, and content ourselves with discovering traces of the Humanity in

every part of the second. It is true that S. Mark begins with the confession that Jesus was "the Son of God," which won for his father in the faith that glorious eulogy,⁸ but it is followed by numberless incidents and expressions which show how he loved to dwell upon the Human and Personal side of His character. He notices again and again the lights and shadows that passed over His Face:—"He looked round about." "He looked round about upon all things." "He looked upon them with anger." "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him." (There must have been something in His expression which revealed His yearning.) So, too, he records His human feelings:—"He sighed." "He sighed deeply in His spirit. He was "moved with compassion." Again, is there no reference to His weariness, in the observation, "They took Him even as He was in the ship"? none to His human tenderness, in the picture of His taking the little children in His arms? It has been observed also that "His condescension to human infirmities, His coming down to meet our weakness," is especially marked in two miracles of healing recorded by S. Mark alone.

While then in S. Matthew we bow the knee with the Eastern kings before Him Who was born "King of the Jews"; while we read the charter of

S. Mark
iii. 5, 34.
xi. 11.

x. 21.

vii. 34.
viii. 12.
i. 41.

iv. 36.

x. 16,
compared
with S.
Matt. xix. 15.

vii. 31-37;
viii. 22-26.

our salvation in the pages of S. Luke ; while we soar with S. John on his eagle wings into the very highest heaven, and realise the Pre-existence of the Word, it is to S. Mark more especially that we turn for the life of Him Who was " touched with a feeling of our infirmities," Who, as the Perfect Man, has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

NOTES.

¹ Besides the references in the margin, we would refer to a close affinity in their conception of the universality of the message of redemption and forgiveness, and to coincidences such as are found in their accounts of the Institution of the Eucharist.

² John Mark was the son of one Mary, who lived at Jerusalem, and may well therefore have seen Jesus from time to time. If, moreover, S. Mark xiv. 51, 52 is an account of what happened to himself, then he certainly was an eye-witness of one of the closing scenes.

³ *εὐθὺς* is translated in the Authorised Version by a variety of English words: " forthwith," " presently," " anon," " straightway," " bye and bye," and " immediately." Something is certainly lost by such capricious renderings.

⁴ At first sight the fact that this is common to SS. Mark and Luke weakens the argument, but it is worthy of notice that there are incidents peculiar to these two Evangelists, which are most easily explained on the supposition that they were the result of their communication with each other when together, as we find they were, from Colossians iv. 10-14, and Philemon 24. Such a detail as the mention of the blaze of the fire leading to S. Peter's

detection, if told to S. Luke by S. Mark, would be sure to impress itself on his memory.

⁵ They were referred to other things also, of which there is a full account in Is. Williams on Study of the Gospels, ch. ii. Some Fathers went so far as to regard them as directly prophetic of the Evangelists; but it is safer to accept them as typical or emblematical. The Lion, as king of beasts, and as belonging to the "royal tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), symbolises Christ's Sovereignty; the ox, as the sacrificial victim, the Atoning Sacrifice made by the Great High Priest; the eagle, as flying in the heavens, the Divine Life.

⁶ Venetian merchants are said to have brought S. Mark's relics from Alexandria in 815 A.D., and his legendary history has been perpetuated in endless pictures, and not infrequently with the emblem of the Lion.

⁷ The "Regal" character of the first Gospel is illustrated especially by the Genealogy through a line of kings, by the numerous parables of the "kingdom," and by an air of authority assumed throughout by our Lord, not to name a variety of details, for which cf. Is. Williams.

■ The words are absent from the Sinaitic MS.

II.

The Preaching of the Baptist.

S. MARK I. 2-6.

2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. 4. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey.

WE often speak of a "royal road," or "king's highway," by which we mean one that has been prepared beforehand, from which all obstacles have been removed, to assure a smooth and easy journey for the king or noble whenever he undertakes it.

Such a highway Isaiah seven centuries before had predicted should be made for the King of kings :
"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain Isa. xl. 4.
and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."
Malachi had taken up his parable, and repeated the declaration : "Behold, I will send My messenger, Mal. iii. 1.

Mal. iv. 5.

and he shall prepare the way before Me," and had closed the scroll of ancient prophecy with the words, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet."¹

From that day onward the Jews have lived and still live in expectation of the prophet's return.² They place a splendid chair for him at the rite of Circumcision, and set the door wide open to welcome him. The noblest cup is filled for him on the first two nights of the Passover. When treasures are found which no one claims, they are put aside, and if perplexing difficulties arise, they are left "till Elijah comes," who will restore and settle all things.

Just when this eager hope had reached its highest pitch, He by Whose Providence everything happens at the right and at no other time, caused His servant, John the Baptist, "to be wonderfully born," and to grow up "in the spirit and power of Elias," as the forerunner of His kingdom.

The points of resemblance between the two prophets are very striking. All that we are told of Elijah's early years is summed up in the words, "Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead:" but brief as they are, they are full of suggestion. Gilead was "a rocky region," a land of forests rather than of cities, isolated from the rest of Palestine. It was in such separation and exclusion

¹ Kings
xvii. 1.

Stanley,
Sin. and
Palest.
323-325.

that he was trained, and taught to stand alone, against the days when he would be called to confront a profligate court, and contend single-handed with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

1 Kings
xviii. 19.

So with the Baptist; all that is recorded of his life during the thirty years' probation for his office is gathered into a single verse: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." And when he came forth to his work he revived at once the recollections of Elijah.

S. Luke i. 80

Like him in his rough exterior—"the long-haired man with a leathern girdle"³—with the same spareness of diet, the same endurance of hardness and poverty, the same fearless, undaunted courage. And just as the elder prophet had gained his strength in retirement, so John had realised amid the awful stillness of his desert life the greatness and nearness of God. Though he knew that he "had no friend but God," the consciousness of His friendship was just that without which he would have been impotent for his work; and we can well believe that it made itself felt. Like the after-glow of the Divine Presence on the Lawgiver's face, fresh from communing in the mount, it inspired the people with awe, and held them spell-bound when he spoke.

2 Kings i. 8.

Exod.
xxxiv. 30.

Now, apart from his resemblance to the expected prophet, what was the secret of his influence? For there is no question that he exercised a marvellous fascination over his countrymen. We may sum it up by the word "reality." In an age of hollowness and hypocrisy never equalled before or since, such a characteristic was bound to startle men and arrest their attention. The Baptist, if any one, practised what he preached. His protest against sin was embodied in his example. Take a single illustration from his habit and dress. He came to denounce luxury and soft clothing and sumptuous fare, and he was a living example of the austerity which he called for. And how many preachers have been prompted to imitate him! SS. Martin and Dominic, and Anselm and Boromeo, and a host of others, have themselves worn the same externals of severity, as the surest way of recommending the self-denial they sought to inculcate. And though such asceticism is deprecated in the nineteenth century, history bears abundant witness to its power in the past. It was from a hard life in the desert that SS. Gregory Nazianzen and Basil came forth to preach with such success; and Simon Stylites was by no means a solitary instance to show how men of active lives and varied occupations, how even kings, bur-

S. Chrysostom *in loc.*
Cornelius
à Lapidè in
Matt. iii. 4.

Theodoret,
Philotheus,
Sym. xxvi.

dened with imperial cares, were eager to seek counsel and direction from a lonely and austere ascetic.

Baronius,
Ann. Eccles.
464. 3.

So when the Baptist came, men were drawn irresistibly to his feet.⁴ "There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan." It was a mixed multitude of almost every class. The other Evangelists help us to realise its heterogeneous character. There were Pharisees,⁵ whose scrupulous routine of external observance had woven around them a web of self-satisfied pride; and Sadducees, whose reaction from superstition had landed them in a cold and heartless infidelity. Among these there would be followers of Shammai, cleaving to tradition and rigidly orthodox; sympathisers also with his opponent Hillel, just emerging from that slavery to the letter which had taken the very life out of their religion.⁶ There were soldiers, too, who through the lawless rapacity of their generals had learned to think only of loot and plunder; and the hated publicans,⁷ with their overreaching and fraudulent exactions, the byword for all that was lowest and most contemptible—all were there, and for all he had the same message, "Repent." The Rabbis have a wonderful comment on the import of that message. "If," they say, "Israel would repent, they would be redeemed."

Herzog,
Real-
Encycl.

S. Luke
iii. 14.

S. Luke
iii. 12.

Synhed. 97 *b*
and 98 *a*.
Pirke de
R. Elieser,
1 cap. xliii.

His voice was like an earthquake, "the wrath to come," "the uplifted axe," and it sent a shudder, as well it might, through the whole land. It was the echo of what Daniel had heard: "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven: he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches."

Dan. iv.
13, 14.

God knows whether history is repeating itself, and the national vices of another country are preparing a similar judgment to that from which S. John would have saved Jerusalem. There are terrible revelations of a spreading unbelief—active and determined unbelief—and they are such as to make every thoughtful Englishman fall upon his knees and pray God for a second Baptist to startle us to repentance.

"Life is real, life is earnest." That was the burden alike of the preacher's precept and example; and just in proportion as individuals acknowledge the obligation to make it such, will the world be ready to welcome the returning Lord with the cry, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

Isa. xxv. 9.

NOTES.

¹ "The Tishbite" found its way into the LXX. version, and appeared to imply the return of the *personal* Elijah rather than the advent of one who should come in the likeness of his spirit. For the geography of Thisbe, and the correctness of reading in 1 Kings xvii. 1, cf. Smith's Bib. Dict. *in loc.*

² Edersheim, vol. ii. App. viii., has collected a mass of Rabbinic tradition about the prophet.

³ Literally "a lord of hair." In LXX. *ἀνθρῶπος δασύς*. "Leathern" is simply "of skin," as always elsewhere.

⁴ "The idea of the wilderness was sacred to the Jews." "From it," say the Rabbis, "came the Law, the Tabernacle, the Sanhedrim, the Priesthood, and the office of the Levites. Even the kingship, and indeed every good gift which God granted to Israel, came from the desert." Quoted by Geikie, i. 392; also by Sepp. ii. 41.

⁵ S. Luke vii. 30 implies that they did not submit to the Rite of Baptism.

⁶ The above distinction is not always so marked, and instances are quoted from *Edujoth* (of the Mishnah) to show that sometimes Hillel was more severe than Shammai. They were the last of the five "Couples" who filled up the interval between the death of Simon the Just, the last of the Great Synagogue, and the Advent of our Lord.

⁷ In the Greek the title is *τελώνης*, a contractor for the revenue, a term equally applicable to the equestrian capitalists at Rome, who made the contract in the first instance, as to the native tax-gatherers, to whom they sublet them. The term "publican" arose from paying the sum *in publicum*, *i.e.* the Treasury at Rome, which was done by the Roman knights, not by the provincial collectors. The retention of the term, therefore, in the Revised Translation is unfortunate, apart from the modern acceptance of it.

III.

The Baptism of Jesus.

S. MARK I. 7-II.

7. And preached, saying, There cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9. And it came to pass in those days, *that* Jesus came from Naza-

reth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10. And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: 11. and there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

It was a time of eager expectation, and the news that a prophet had appeared wrought the people's hopes to the highest pitch; and when John stood by the banks of the Jordan, and with a voice of power and persuasion called upon them to wash and be clean, "there went out unto him all the land of Judæa."

But he would not have his mission misunderstood; his was only a symbolical¹ washing of water; it was to be followed, if their repentance were true, by a baptism of fire and the Holy Spirit, which should purge the conscience and make them new

creatures. His work was preparatory. Great as he might seem to them, he was as far inferior to his Successor as a slave is below his master; he was not even fit to carry His shoes or untie their latchet.²

S. Aug. de
Consens.
Evang. ii. 12.

The words had scarcely passed his lips when the Greater than he appeared; ay, He was in their midst all the time, and neither he³ nor they knew it. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to John, to be baptized of him."⁴ The Baptist was staggered by the bare thought that He, Whose forerunner he was—for Whom he had just declared his unworthiness to perform the most menial office—should seek at his hands the baptism of repentance—the baptism of sinners. No wonder that "he forbad Him," and exclaimed, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

S. Matt.
iii. 14.

Now it is not possible for us to understand the whole mystery of this act, but we may reverently consider some of the motives which prompted the amazing condescension.

First, then, it may have been to consecrate water for the remission of sins. Just as the brooding of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters at the first creation reduced order out of chaos, and prepared that element for all the purifications of

S. Ignatius
ad Ephes. 18.
S. Hieron.
adv.
Lucifer, 6.
S. Greg. Naz.
Orat. in
Nativ.
S. Aug. Serm.
Append.
xxix.

the first Dispensation ; so when the moral re-creation of the world was inaugurated the operation of the same Blessed Agent, descending upon our Lord in the river Jordan, sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin.

Again, it may have been that He designed thereby to be made one with His brethren, or to taste for their sakes at the outset of His ministry that curse of sin which He felt in all its intolerable burden at the close, before He cried, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

We know that He had no sins to confess, no stains of a guilty conscience to wash away, for "He was holy, harmless, and undefiled;" but that He might be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," He mixed with a crowd of sin-laden souls, and, as though He were Himself a sinner, sought a sinner's cleansing in the baptism of repentance.

S. Matt.
iii. 15.

Another motive He has expressly revealed. When the Baptist shrank back from an act that at first must have seemed nothing short of a profanation, his hesitation was overcome by the request, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

"I come," He seems to say, "to set an example of perfect obedience, and whatsoever the Father has laid

upon Me of duty and requirement that will I do." "Thus it becometh us." He does not say, "Thus it is necessary," for that would have implied that He needed cleansing. All that was incumbent upon Him was a perfect acquiescence in His Father's Will. It is true the Law had provided no Baptism of repentance, but if, as He knew, the Baptism of John was "of heaven," He was as much bound to accept this, as were Moses or Aaron any of those Levitical ordinances which God had expressly enjoined.

And yet once more, underlying this resolution of obedience was the consciousness of a deep humiliation. His whole life from Bethlehem to Golgotha was one unbroken course of self-abasement; but it reached its lowest depth in His Baptism. To have every word misinterpreted, every act, even of mercy and compassion, misconstrued; to be accused of working through the very agency which He came to tread under foot,—all this must have been most galling to hear; but to be told that by His Own confession He was a sinner, one with publicans and harlots, and that by His Own act and deed He admitted His guilt, and sought to have it removed,—such self-abasement is more than man can either measure or conceive.

S. Mark
i. 22.

And in this consummate act He did indeed "ful-

fil all righteousness," for humiliation is the very keynote of the religion which He came to enforce and illustrate.

Cornel. à
Lap. *in loc.*
S. Aug. Ep.
ad Dios-
curum, lvi.

It was the conviction of this that led S. Augustine to appeal so earnestly to his friend to submit to the discipline of Christ and fortify himself by the self-same exercise. "Demosthenes," he said, "when asked what was the first rule of oratory, replied, 'Pronunciation,' and when asked for the second rule, replied, 'Pronunciation,' and being asked again for the third, still answered, 'Pronunciation.' So if you should put question after question to ascertain the precepts of Christianity, I should tell you that I cared for nothing but self-abasement, though I might possibly be obliged to mention other things."

S. Matt.
iii. 16.

Now, if we need encouragement, we may find it in the fact that the submission of our Lord was immediately followed by a signal manifestation of Divine favour.⁵ Straightway coming up out of the water, "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him : and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

S. John i. 32. He saw, and the Baptist saw, but not the bystanders. It was doubtless, as with S. Stephen, who "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the

right hand of God," while to the unpurged eyes of the wicked persecutors no such vision was vouchsafed, for spiritual things are discerned only by spiritual men.

Now it will be well for us to remember that our great Example was most highly exalted just when His humiliation was deepest; that it was when He had made Himself one with the sons of men that He was declared to be the Son—the beloved Son—of God. It is a pledge that the lowly submissive spirit will be greatly sanctified, and that there is no surer way to win the approval of God than by yielding our wills to the authority of those set over us by the Lord, and striving to carry out the rules of the Church in the spirit of Him Who accepted at once what His Father had appointed. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

NOTES.

¹ Just as in the Mosaic Dispensation it was enjoined that no one might appear in the Presence of God till he had washed in the Laver at the door of the Tabernacle, so the open Advent of God among men must be preceded by a mighty cleansing from the defilement of sin.

² It was the part of the slave to attend upon his master at the bath, and to perform these menial duties. The connection is well expressed in the oft-misinterpreted passage, Ps. lx., "Moab is my

wash-pot ; over Edom will I cast out my shoe." Moab and Edom are both to be reduced to a menial condition. He will wash his feet in the one and toss his shoes to the other.

³ It is a question how far the Baptist knew Jesus personally before the Baptism. The chief texts bearing upon the subject are S. Matt. iii. 14 and S. John i. 31-33. Cf. Mill on Pantheistic Principles, ii. 1-5.

■ The traditional sites of the Baptism are about two hours' walk from Jericho. The Greek and Latin Churches have fixed upon separate sites, separated from each other two or three miles. Pilgrims flock thither to bathe from all parts. Cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 615.

⁵ There was an old tradition that, in addition to the attesting signs mentioned in Holy Scripture, "a fire was kindled over Jordan." Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial. c. Tryph.* 88 ; Epiphanius, *Hær.* xxx. 13.

IV.

Our Lord's Temptation.

S. MARK I. 12, 13.

12. And immediately the Spirit ness forty days, tempted of Satan;
driveth Him into the wilderness. and was with the wild beasts; and
13. And He was there in the wilder- the angels ministered unto Him.

THERE is a special attraction for us in the story of our Lord's Temptation, and it lies in this: it is the one page which He must have written, as it were, by His Own hand; a personal revelation of what no human eye but His Own could possibly have witnessed.

His miracles and sermons had been seen or heard by many, and the memory of them was cherished and handed down from mouth to mouth; but that strange conflict with the Evil One—that triple wrestling with His ghostly enemy—it was witnessed by no earthly spectator. Alone He had trodden the winepress of temptation; alone He had vanquished His foe, and He alone could repeat to the Apostle or Evangelist its wonderful history. And we feel quite sure that of all the marvels they were called upon

to record, nothing could have filled them with such amazement as this revelation from His Own lips.

Now it would be no little satisfaction if we could identify the scene, but it is surrounded with uncertainty. It may have been the wilderness of Jericho, the Quarantania of later days, that region of barren limestone rock with its endless fissures and caverns, where hermits have often fled from the world, where year after year pious pilgrims encamped for penance and prayer, because they believed that a vivid realisation of their Saviour's victory would make resistance easier and deliverance more certain.¹ Or it may have been that He was carried by the Spirit into the more distant desert of Arabia, to the scene of Elijah's preternatural fast of forty days, where Moses also had tarried in the mount for a like period, and "did neither eat bread nor drink water;" and this would complete the analogy. The Three who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration had each inaugurated a vast Dispensation; each had been prepared for the work by the same miraculous fast, and in the same silent and secluded spot.

But wherever the desert lay, what was it that Jesus Christ was subjected to? S. Mark is very brief in his description, but it is most suggestive.

"He was with the wild beasts." Is this only one

Robinson,
Palestine,
i. 567.
Stanley, Sin.
and Palest.
308.

1 Kings
xix. 8.
Exodus
xxxiv. 28.

of those graphic touches which this vivid writer so often gives us? Was it a forcible way of describing a total absence of human sympathy? No doubt it served this purpose, but this was not all. When we recognise the correspondence between this and Adam's temptation, our thoughts fly at once to Paradise, and we remember that he too was with the wild beasts, and that God had given him dominion over them, and that during the brief duration of his innocence he must have exercised it unfearing and unfeared. And we fancy we can see in this short but pregnant sentence a hint that He Who came to inaugurate an era of restoration, and bring back the times of man's innocence, was not unmindful of the lower creatures and their subjection to vanity. It was a promise of what should one day come to pass when broken harmonies should be restored, and the prediction of Eliphaz receive its fulfilment, and man "should be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field should be at peace with him." Job v. 23.

It matters little that we can point to no evidence of its accomplishment as yet, because with the Lord "a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years." There is no question that the hope was created, and that it laid hold upon the

Farrar, *Life of Christ*,
i. 121.

mind of the early Christians, in support of which we have the testimony of the Catacombs,² where our Lord is so frequently represented in the character of Orpheus attracting wild animals of divers kinds by the sound of his lyre. The same was perpetuated by later legends which made the surpassing goodness of S. Francis throw a spell of mysterious influence, not only over his fellow-creatures, but over birds of the air and beasts of the field.

S. Matt.
iv. 3-11.
S. Luke
iv. 3-13.
Andrewes,
vol. v. 496.
Mill on the
Tempt.
iii. 60.

Of the Temptation itself S. Mark speaks with even more than his usual brevity. We are obliged to look for the details to S. Matthew and S. Luke. From them we find that Jesus was tried at every point. Three forms of temptation only are spoken of, but they are intended to embrace all that man is liable to. They were the same that were presented to Adam—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

"Command that these stones be made bread." The appetite craves for food: give rein to the indulgence of your lower nature; if you cannot satisfy it in one way, have recourse to another; you may not always be able to choose your mode of subsistence, but you must obtain it somehow.

"Cast Thyself down" from the pinnacle.³ Make

an ostentatious display of your power and win the admiration of men.

“All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Seek wealth and power; you know not what influence they will give you in the world; have no scruples, therefore, about the means, think only of the end.

Or we may look at them in another light, as persuasive of mistrust, presumption, and avarice.

Of mistrust: God has forgotten you, take care of yourself, for is not self-preservation a duty incumbent upon every one?

Of presumption: If you are a Christian you will be safe, do what you will and go where you may;⁴ it was in view of this that a guardian angel was appointed to keep you from falling.

Of avarice: If you have set your heart especially upon some one thing, be prepared to make a sacrifice to obtain it; the principle of compensation runs through life.

Such are the forms under which the Tempter tries the mettle of the Christian character of what sort it is; and if he be met in the same spirit and with the same weapons as he was in the wilderness, the test will be satisfied.

S. Mark closes his account with the notice

S. Matt.
iv. 11.

that "angels ministered unto Him." We find elsewhere that their ministration only began when the Tempter left Him. They gave Him no support whilst He was passing through it, as in the Agony, but stood aloof as spectators of the struggle, waiting to see what Humanity was capable of, and only stepped in at the close to honour Him for His victory and enhance His satisfaction. Men share this blessed experience when they feel that inward sense of joy and peace which crowns every success in the conflict of life.

An objection has been raised that as an example the Temptation of our Lord is a failure; that it can be no real help to us, because by reason of His sinlessness successful resistance on His part was a foregone conclusion. The whole subject is full of mystery. Holy Scripture teaches, directly⁵ and indirectly,⁶ that He was incapable of sin, and also that He was tempted. They appear irreconcilable statements, but, like the doctrines of Freewill and Predestination, they will be fully harmonised when we see no longer "through a glass darkly." We can, however, obtain a glimpse at the reality of the Temptation. For instance, He was hungry;⁷ He had a human desire and craving for food, which nature prompted Him to gratify. Now it would have been easy for

Him to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, as He satisfied the famished crowds in the wilderness; but to do that under the circumstances at the bidding of the Tempter would be to act against the Will of God, which was the law of His life.

Thus on one side there was a strong desire, albeit in no way a sinful one; on the other there were facilities for its gratification. It was a real temptation, and His victory lay in making the lower will bend to the higher. Possibly His example would have been more forcible and helpful, had He been capable of sin and triumphed over the tendency, but such a nature would have impaired the efficacy of the Atonement. The lesser would have been gained, the greater lost.

NOTES.

¹ Thomson testifies that Copts and Abyssinians occasionally visit the place now for the same purpose.

² Cf. Catacombs of Rome, by the author of *The Buried Cities of Campania*, 145; Stanley's *Eastern Church*, Lect. vi.; and the Author's observations in *After Death*, 83, 84.

³ This may have been either on the *στοὰ βασιλική*, from which the descent into the valley was most precipitous. It would have been a most appropriate spot if the Temptation was simply to test His supernatural power; but if it had for its object a public

display of it, then it was more probably an apex of the building overlooking one of the Courts of the Israelites, about 200 feet high.

⁴ This will recall a familiar story. A Christian woman, trusting to be preserved by her principles, ventured into a place of a questionable character and came back "possessed." When the exorcist asked the evil spirit how he dared to enter into a Christian, his answer was, "Why not, when I found her upon my own ground?"

⁵ Heb. iv. 15.

⁶ 1st, The union of the Divine and Human involved impeccability, *e.g.* the Beatific Vision consequent upon such union is inconsistent with a capacity for sin. 2d, The Atonement necessitated the perfection of His Nature. The typical victim was free from all defects, either natural or accidental. The Antitype the same, Heb. vii. 26. Heb. ii. 17 must be read in connection with what follows. "In all things" is modified by the object to be attained, *viz.*, the reconciliation of sinners, which can only be effected by a perfect Being. It seems impossible, therefore, that the *posse non peccare* can satisfy the requirements of the case, but *non posse peccare* alone.

⁷ I owe this pertinent illustration to that very thoughtful and helpful book, Hutching's *The Mystery of the Temptation*.

V.

The Call of the Apostles.

S. MARK I. 14-20.

14. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15. and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16. Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers.

17. And Jesus said unto them, Come

ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18. And straightway they forsook their nets,

and followed Him. 19. And when He had gone a little further thence, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the ship mending *their* nets.

20. And straightway He called them : and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him.

THOUGH it is manifest that the individual character of the Evangelist impressed itself upon all that he wrote, it is no less certain that he was supernaturally influenced to write what was best fitted to complete the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. S. John
xiv. 26.

Now it was foretold in the Old Testament that "the Coming One" would in His Own person represent the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, and thereby, as gathering into one all who were conse- Deut.
xviii. 18.
Ps. cx. 4.
Zech. ix. 9.

crated by the anointing oil, prove an indefeasible right to the title of the Messiah, or Anointed. It could hardly then have been undesigned that while S. Matthew has kept mainly in view the Regal, and S. Luke the Priestly side of our Lord's character,¹ S. Mark should have opened the account of His ministry as a Preacher, which then at least was another name for Prophet.

“After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” He had begun His mission in Judæa; but we can easily understand that He would be anxious to remove to another scene. First, in all probability, He would be influenced by prudential reasons. Jerusalem was steeped in bigotry; the priests and rulers must have been roused against Him, and were waiting an opportunity to compass His overthrow, as they did that of His forerunner; for the
S. John ii. 14. cleansing of the Temple² showed them what they had to fear if He were suffered to proceed unchecked.

Again, to have made Samaria the scene of His ministry, except so far as the exigences of travel should take Him there, was to alienate His countrymen.
S. John iv. 19.

Peræa also was out of the question. It was not

only too secluded and thinly-peopled, but Herod Antipas was living at Machærus³ at the time. Had He set foot in the neighbourhood, and lifted up His voice, it could only have been to brand him in the eyes of his subjects as an adulterer and a murderer, and the consequences would have been fatal.

It was of vital importance that any serious check to His enterprise at the outset should be avoided. We may see traces of the same circumspect prudence in the fact that He seems never to have ventured to enter Tiberias,⁴ where also Herod resided, and that He evaded him so successfully, that, notwithstanding the Tetrarch's great desire to see Him, they met for the first time only at the close.

Excluded thus from Judæa, Samaria, and Peræa, He naturally found Himself in Galilee. No preacher or reformer could have wished for a better opening.

"It was to Roman Palestine what the manufacturing districts are to England." It was the focus of the energy and industry of the whole country. Its lake, which was the centre of the northern trade and fisheries, from its contrast to the deserted shores of the Dead Sea, has been aptly called "the Sea of Life."

So it was that He came and preached to the

Josephus,
Wars, ii. 9. 1
S. Luke
xxiii. 8.

Stanley,
Sin. and
Palest. 376.
Josephus,
Wars, iv.
8. 2.

eager, excitable Galileans, and the burden of His message was "the gospel of the kingdom of God." A kingdom implied not only a king, but subordinate officers, and He proceeded at once to the selection.

Now the apparent abruptness of the Call of the Apostles has led to misconceptions of what really took place. They arise chiefly from the difficulty in discovering the true historic sequence of the earlier events. How many persons think that our Lord, as He passed by, seeing one here and another there, one in his boat, another at his custom-office, spake the words, "Follow Me," and it was done: without delay and without reserve they gave themselves up from that moment body and soul to His service. He might, of course, have fascinated them by such a sudden spell had He chosen, but it was not in accord with His usual mode of dealing with men; and a little attentive study will show that some at least reached the Apostleship only by degrees and preparatory stages of careful training.

S. John
i. 35-45.

There was first the admission to His personal acquaintance and friendship; then followed the abandonment of their secular occupation for closer attendance upon His ministry; and lastly the solemn ordination of those whom He finally selected, and their investiture with supernatural powers.

S. Mark passes over in silence the first stage; indeed none but S. John, who was one of the first to be attracted to our Lord, notice it; and it is no matter of surprise that it should have been so. Knowing, as we do, how sacred first meetings come to be considered, when followed by momentous histories, we can easily understand how he should have cherished, even to old age, the recollection of what seemed to others an unimportant event, because it had coloured his whole life.

Bruce,
Training of
the Twelve,
ch. i.

The first invitation to follow Him was only to occasional companionship, but He began at once to train them for something more; they witnessed the miracle at Cana of Galilee; they were with Him at the first Passover, and they saw the marvellous exhibition of His power in the cleansing of the Temple.

Then take the second stage, which S. Mark brings before us in this passage. They had returned to their occupation: "As He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers;" but what they had witnessed had sunk down into their hearts. No doubt they often talked of it as they tossed upon the waves, and had fully prepared themselves for a further surrender, and so when He said, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become

S. John
xxi. 3.

fishers of men," "straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him;" and we read no more of their fishing,⁵ at least till after His death, when, thinking their discipleship was over, they went back to their old calling.

The second summons, then, led to an unbroken attendance upon our Lord, but time must yet elapse before their Ordination. They must hear in secret what they had to preach openly; He must whisper in their ears the truths which they should proclaim upon the housetops.

S. Matt
xxviii. 19.

And they had much to unlearn as well. They had a catholic message to deliver, and all narrow-minded Jewish ideas must be eradicated, and their hearts enlarged by the witness of a sympathy wide as the world itself.

And they must see as well as hear—see the perfect life, that for which God had become Incarnate; they must study every feature and lineament before they could be able to proclaim Jesus, and be His witnesses to an unbelieving world.

S. Mark
iii. 13.

Into all this they were more or less initiated during this second stage. The company of followers and disciples grew considerably, and the final selection was made, as we shall find in the third chapter, from a wider circle.

Now the Call of the Apostles suggests two considerations which have an important bearing upon our estimate of the Christian Ministry.

The first is, that God should have condescended to associate with Himself human agents in carrying on a Divine work.

The second, that He should have deliberately selected for the purpose such feeble helpers as ignorant peasants and poor fishermen.

He has manifestly by the counsel of His Will determined that a duly called and ordained Ministry should be an essential part of His Church on earth. If ever there was a time when we might have expected Him to dispense with human agency, it was surely when He was Himself present among men in visible form; but out of an amazing loving-kindness He preferred to give to men the honour and delight of being helpers with Him in the dispensation of grace; and of all that have since lived and believed He still says, "I drew them Hosea xi. 4. with cords of a man, and with bands of love."

Yet further, it is no less a law of His kingdom that He should work the grandest results by the simplest means; and so He chooses "the foolish 1 Cor. i. 27. things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things

2 Cor. iv

which are mighty," and He gives us the treasure of His grace and Sacraments "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

NOTES.

¹ Cf. i. 5.

² This cleansing had taken place at the opening of His ministry. For the distinctions between it and the last, cf. ii. 94-95.

³ Machærus was an almost impregnable fortress built on the south-eastern frontier of Peræa by Alexander Jannæus, and strengthened by Herod the Great to overawe the Arab tribes. It was the favourite residence of Antipas.

⁴ Tiberias was built by Antipas, and made the capital of Galilee instead of Sepphoris. Agrippa II. changed back again to the old town.

⁵ The case mentioned in S. Matt. xvii. 27, where S. Peter was sent to fish with a view to finding a coin, was clearly exceptional.

VI.

The Synagogue at Capernaum.

S. MARK I. 21-28.

21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as *One* that had authority, and not as the scribes. 23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24. saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with Thee, *Thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God. 25. And Jesus rebuked

him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that *they* questioned among themselves, saying, What *thing* is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him. 28. And immediately His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

THE synagogue carries us back for its origin to the land of the Exile. Cut off from the sacrificial worship of the Temple, devout Jews gathered together for prayer and hearing of the Law, and "little sanctuaries" were built for their meetings; and after the Return from Captivity, though the statelier ritual of the Temple was restored, synagogues in towns and villages became an integral part of the ecclesiastical system. They claim our

interest, not only from their association with our Lord's preaching and miracles, but as well from the fact that it was from "the eighteen prayers"¹ which were read therein daily except on the Sabbath, that Jesus drew the chief materials for that which the Christian Church has consecrated for daily use as "the Lord's Prayer."

Shemonêh
Esrêh ; cf.
Freeman,
Principles of
Divine Ser-
vice, i. 417.
Prideaux,
Connexion,
i. vi. 1.

Now, of all the synagogues in Palestine, perhaps that at Capernaum is fullest of historic reference. Its erection at the sole expense of a large-hearted Roman soldier had earned for him the affection of the inhabitants, for when his servant was sick, they pleaded with Jesus on the grounds that the petitioner was worthy of special consideration, because "he loved the people and built us the synagogue."² The discovery and identification of its ruins in later years have awakened no little attention, and have set at rest a long-standing dispute as to the site of Capernaum.³ At Tell Hûm, on the Lake, remains of a synagogue of unusual size and beauty have been excavated, the style of which belongs to the Hero-dian period of architecture. It appears to have been a common custom to carve over the entrance of these buildings an emblem, which, as far as we know, with a single exception, was "the seven-branched candlestick," indicating that they were designed

S. Luke
vii. 5.

Robinson,
ii. 403, 404 ;
iii. 344-358.

Ritter,
ii. 273-278.

mainly for illumination or teaching. The exceptional instance is at Tell Hâm. The lintel of the chief doorway has a carving in the centre, of "the pot of manna,"⁴ which is encircled with the vine and clusters of grapes. And it is this which enables us to identify "His Own city," as well as the building where He delivered one of His most important discourses. At the same time it helps to establish the catholic interpretation of His teaching on the occasion as anticipatory of the Holy Eucharist. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." "I am the Living Bread Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum."

S. John
vi. 49, 51, 59.

It was in this building that our Lord spent the morning of His first Sabbath-day in Galilee, and He taught with such novel power that the people were filled with amazement. They had been used to the teaching of the Scribes, with their interminable details and puerilities, and their slavery to traditional interpretation. There was no freedom of thought or speech, no departure even by a hair's-breadth from the decisions of the doctors, nothing

but the dry bones of Rabbinical exposition, and we are not surprised that when Christ came and spoke with "thoughts that breathed and words that burned," and drew His illustrations from the sights and sounds in which they lived and moved, the very freshness delighted them, and they exclaimed at the novelty and independence of His teaching.

While Jesus was speaking, there was one in the congregation—a man of an unclean spirit—who was stirred beyond the rest by the things that he heard, and he filled the air with his wild cries and raving. It is the first mentioned of the many cases of "demoniacal possession" which fill the pages of the Gospels, but find scarcely a place in later histories.⁵

Attempts have been made to explain away such a strange phenomenon. It has been supposed that our Lord spoke only in accommodation to a general but mistaken belief of the times, when He attributed some of the worst diseases to a direct occupation of the bodies of the afflicted by evil spirits. It is quite true that "possession" and physical infirmities were often found in the same person, and naturally so, if we accept that teaching of Scripture which makes Satan the author of bodily as well as spiritual evil, of which we have illustrations in Job's blains and boils, or S. Paul's thorn in the flesh,⁶ or the

S. Matt. ix.
32, xii. 22.
S. Mark
ix. 17.

Job ii. 7.

2 Cor. xii. 7.

poor woman with the spirit of infirmity; but no disease by itself, either of body or mind, however aggravated its form, can possibly satisfy the language of Scripture, and explain the double personality which is so patent in almost every recorded case. Look at the present instance. See how at one time the man, at another the evil spirit, rules his actions. He is described as "unclean;" like the rest he had found his dwelling in the tombs; an overpowering influence had driven him away from the haunts of men, but now he comes back, struggling to assert the authority which he had lost, and in one of his better moments he had crept into the synagogue, hoping to find some peace and deliverance from his persecutor in the house of God. Had the evil power within him been undivided, it was the last place to which he would have suffered him to resort. How many have testified to the relief they have found in the services of the Church, and there alone, from temptations of the Evil One! If it was under such an impulse as this that the demoniac entered the synagogue at Capernaum, he found even more than he hoped for, no mere temporary reprieve, but permanent security from the power of his tormentor.

S. Luke
xiii. 16.

The foul spirit recognised the Presence of Him

Who had come for the express purpose of treading Satan under His feet, and reasserting his overmastering influence upon the will of the possessed, he made him the mouthpiece of his terrible forebodings, "Ah !⁷ art Thou come to destroy us ?" but in the midst of his fear, albeit with an expression of contempt, "Thou Jesus the Nazarene," he pays Him the homage which the Jew by himself would have refused, "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

That our Lord at once delivered the poor man from this terrible possession was a natural consequence of the interruption. It was the suffering with which He felt the keenest sympathy, and for which He brought the quickest relief.

S. Mark alone of the Evangelists has preserved the rebuke, "Hold thy peace." It is full of stern severity, as well for the pretended homage, as for the accompanying contempt. From such a quarter He will brook neither the one nor the other. Had it been some poor sinful man, who in his ignorance had heaped reproachful titles on His head, He would have met them with the gentlest remonstrance; or if such an one had recognised His Divine mission in the midst of prevailing unbelief, He would have hailed the confession with gladness;

but from the evil spirits, with all their determined antagonism and malignity, He would receive nothing.

And herein what a contrast there is between His ^{Hook on Miracles, i. 65.} conduct and ours! When we have an object in view, and it is a matter of importance, there is often far too little scruple about the means of attaining it. Any assistance is enlisted, perhaps cordially welcomed. If a Christian is enforcing the beauty of our Lord's life, he may press into his service the confession of one hostile to the Faith. It may be that he is able to quote from it some favourable testimony, and he seems to experience satisfaction at receiving it from such an unexpected quarter. But the principle is condemned by our Lord's rebuke in the synagogue at Capernaum, "Hold thy peace." Better to trust to its own inherent goodness than be impatient to support a righteous cause by questionable means. "The weapons of our warfare are ^{2 Cor. x. 4.} not carnal," and if only they are kept free from worldliness, they will be powerful to the pulling down of all strongholds of the enemy, and for the defence and security of right and justice.

NOTES.

¹ Wetstein on S. Matt. vi. refers the contents of the Lord's Prayer to private prayers used by the Jews; but this is an opinion peculiar to himself. All the petitions have been identified by Freeman in spirit, if not in words, with some in the *Shemonêh Esrêh*, except "as we forgive them," etc., which, he says, being strictly Christian, has no parallel. For this reason Jesus commented upon this, "For if ye forgive not," etc. It was a new feature. Cf. references in the margin. This view, however, will be combated in a forthcoming number of the Journal of Philology, in an article by Dr. Schiller-Szinessy, on "The Sources of Christian Prayers." The words "as we forgive them" are practically found in the Talmud. "To whom does God forgive iniquity? To him who overlooks a trespass"—*i.e.* If you forgive a little sin against yourself God will forgive you a great one.—Talm. Bab. Rosh Hasshanah 17 a.

■ In Greek the article is expressed.

³ The two sites about which the dispute has been are Khân Minyeh and Tell Hâm, distant from each other about three miles. Accounts of the reasons for choosing one or the other are to be found in Ritter, ii. 273-278. In addition to the argument drawn from the coincidence given above, Tell Hâm, "High hill," explains "Thou Capernaum, which art exalted," etc. It must surely have had a physical elevation to have suggested such a mode of describing its moral advantages.

⁴ This has been photographed in a series issued by the Society for the Exploration of Palestine. Such an uncommon emblem would attract our Lord's attention, and lead to the spiritual application of the manna, when the subject was broached. Much of His teaching was based upon objects immediately present. On this supposition a reason is found for His speaking by anticipation

of the Holy Eucharist, which was not instituted till a year after ; the combination of the Vine and the Manna, so suggestive to Him Who knew the end from the beginning, led Him to dwell upon that which they foreshadowed, though circumstances forbade His giving the full explanation. This would be clear only when the Feast was instituted, and the thoughts of the disciples would revert to what He had said in the synagogue.

⁵ It is mentioned in Just. Mart., Dial. c. Tryph. and Tertullian's Apology, and notices of exorcism are not infrequent ; but the evil is less and less noticed, and dies out altogether at an early period. For a full discussion, cf. Delitzsch, Biblical Psychology, 358-360, Eng. Tr. For further information on Demoniactal Possession, cf. pp. 164-172 and notes.

⁶ For a full discussion, cf. Lightfoot, Galatians, pp. 169-175, in which he clearly establishes the belief that it was a bodily not spiritual infirmity.

⁷ εα is probably an interjection. It is omitted altogether in the majority of MSS.

VII.

S. Peter's Wife's Mother.

S. MARK I. 29-35.

29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. 31. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. 32. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that

were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34. And he healed many *that were* sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him.

35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

VERY little has been preserved to us touching the home-life of the Apostles. A tradition in the Armenian Church speaks of all being married except S. Thomas and the two sons of Zebedee, but whether true or not, it is unsupported by any general evidence.

In this uncertainty, such a passage as that before us at once excites our interest. At all events, the chief of the Twelve was a married man. The name of his wife has come down to us as Concordia and Perpetua; and a very touching incident in con-

1 Cor. ix. 5.

Cornelius à
Lapide on
S. Matt.
viii. 14.

nection with her martyrdom has been narrated by two early writers of considerable importance. It is said that the Apostle, on seeing her led out to execution, rejoiced in the mighty privilege of which she was deemed worthy, and cheered her by words of endearment and consolation to meet her death with unfaltering courage.

Clem. Alex.
Strom. vii.
xi.
Euseb.
iii. 30.

It was the mother of this holy woman who had fallen sick of a fever,¹ which S. Luke, with his accurate knowledge of disease, characterised as of no ordinary type of severity. Her friends and relations waylaid our Lord as He was leaving the synagogue service on the Sabbath morning, and summoned Him to her bedside.

His very first act marked the tenderness of His nature. We know well what courage it seems to give us in our weakness to feel the touch of a strong hand; it was doubtless for this purpose that He did not speak merely, but Himself lifted her up in the bed—"and immediately the fever left her." But though this may have been His first object, it could hardly have been the only one. He Who has taught us by deeds as well as words—from Whose mode² of working miracles we can learn almost as much as from what fell from His lips—He touched her, as He touched the leper and the daughter of

Jairus, and a host of others who came to Him, in anticipation of the sacramental ordinances He had always in view. It was a way of showing the life-giving virtue which comes from contact with the Body of the Incarnate God, an anticipation of His promise, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life."

"The fever left her, and she ministered unto them."

It marks the completeness of the cure; there was none of that weakness which is usually so trying when the fever subsides; there was no period of convalescence for the gradual recovery of strength, but she felt herself at once in perfect health.

Now it was quite natural that the fame of two such miracles as this and the cure of the demoniac should spread rapidly. The congregation when they broke up would carry far and wide the news of what they had seen in the synagogue; and now the friends, whose anxiety for the fever-stricken patient had been so great, could ill conceal the joyful intelligence of the second restoration.

But it was the Sabbath-day, and by the interpretation of the Law which the Scribes had taught, it was forbidden to attend to any but acute diseases; chronic cases could wait; and so we read that it was not till sunset, when, according to Jewish reckon-

S. John
vi. 54.

Lev. xviii. 5.
Edersheim,
Life and
Times,
ii. 59, 60.
Geikie, Life
and Words,
ii. 96.

ing, the day ended, that the people generally availed themselves of His power to heal. "At even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils."

It is far more likely that this, and not any desire to avoid the heat of the day, was the cause of the delay. Had they really believed what they had heard, they would never have stayed from fear of temporary inconvenience or a possible aggravation of disease. They would have felt that it was far better to insure the recovery, though it might be preceded by a brief increase of pain, than to risk His departure. But the fear of breaking the Sabbath had a very strong hold upon them, and so they let the weary hours pass before they turned into the streets and made their way to the house where He was staying. We can hardly imagine the crowd: "all the city was gathered together at the door." The whole suffering population, halt, lame, and blind, the sick and sore with every kind of infirmity, the bereft of reason and the possessed of demons, all were there, and for all there was the same gracious and ready help: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Here, as in the synagogue, the evil spirits were foremost to recognise Him, but He

S. Cyril
Alex. in
Luc. iv. 41.

rebuked their utterance and suffered them not to speak. It was not by the witness of enemies, not by the confession of those who cried out in fear and anger that He was "the Holy One of God," that He would win His way in the world, but by the willing testimony of men who were convinced by what they saw, and cried out of the depths of their conviction, "Truly this was the Son of God." It was thus that His kingdom should be established in the hearts of men.

S. Matt.
xxvii. 54.

Isa. lxi. 1.

Now it had been foretold ages and ages before, that the Messiah should bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, that He should be sent "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." And this day they must have felt that this scripture was fulfilled in their ears. If their thoughts went to Nazareth and the carpenter's shop, and the doubts and misgivings which so often rose up for men's bewilderment had had any place in the minds of those who saw what was done in Capernaum, they must have completely vanished, and this question must have put every other aside, "When Christ cometh, can He do greater miracles than this Man doeth?"

S. Mark vi. 3.

There are many passages in our Lord's life which

we should wish to paint if we could give anything like an adequate representation of the scene; but perhaps there is none which would be more likely to win acceptance, or which would give a truer idea of His real character than this.

In the streets of Capernaum and before Simon's door there is gathered all the sorrow, the suffering, the misery of the world; and in the midst of it moves One in form like themselves—"the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"—and yet as He passes by "virtue goes out of Him and heals them all." Never was He more truly "the Christ" than He must have seemed then. But the work of healing was over, and the night closed in. The day had been one that must have tried our Lord's human strength to its furthest limits; but we are amazed to read that the hours of well-earned sleep were curtailed, and that He rose "a great while before day," and went into a solitary place to pray. Temptations awaited Him on the morrow: there would be crosses and disappointments, failures and provocations, and they must be prepared for. Perhaps in nothing have we more need to follow His example than in this.

What a rebuke it is to the worldly maxim, "A busy life is hardly compatible with a life of devotion"!

We cannot tell what may befall us any single day we live; but all experience teaches that a life alike of business and enjoyment must bring entanglements and dangers: in the one of overreaching our neighbours, in the other of forgetting God. No man can presume to say that he can meet them in confidence and safety whose spirit is not fortified by prayer and communion with God.

Phil. iv. 13. "Of mine own self I can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me."

NOTES.

¹ S. Luke calls it a "great" fever. This is supposed, from the use of the term in contemporary writers, to indicate a recognised type of fever, such as scarlet or typhus with us. We learn from traveller that a very malignant form of the disease is still prevalent in the marshy plains near Capernaum. Cf. Tristram, *Land of Israel*, 448; Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 356.

² S. Augustine has expressed this very beautifully in Tract xxiv. on S. John: "*Interrogemus ipsa miracula, quid nobis loquantur de Christo; habent enim, si intelligantur, linguam suam. Nam quia ipse Christus Verbum est, etiam factum Verbi verbum nobis est.*"

VIII.

The Leper Cleansed.

S. MARK I. 36-45.

36. And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him. 37. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All *men* seek for Thee. 38. And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I forth. 39. And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40. And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *His* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I

will ; be thou clean. 42. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43. And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away ; 44. and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any *man* : but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 45. But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places : and they came to Him from every quarter.

THERE were pains and penalties attaching to the leper such as were unknown in the case of other sufferers. Leprosy, for instance, entailed separation from society. "He shall dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be." "He shall cry, Unclean, unclean," to warn the passer-by of his approach. By a merciful concession he was allowed to enter a synagogue, but a vacant space was drawn

Lev. xiii.
45, 46.

Mishnah,
Negaim,
xiii. 12.

around him, and it was enjoined that he should be the first to enter and the last to leave.

The same primal law of isolation seems to have been enforced in spirit wherever the disease has been perpetuated. In the East the Lepers' Quarters revive the memory of the Mosaic restrictions, and they are found not only in Jerusalem, where we are so familiar with them, but in many of the smaller towns.¹ And when during the Crusades the disease was imported into this country, leazar-houses² were built away from the frequented districts, and the inmates were only suffered to go abroad at certain seasons, and conditionally upon their giving timely notice of their presence.

Josephus,
Antiq.
iii. 11. 3.
Numb.
xii. 12.
Lev.
xiii. 4, 5.
Lev.
xiv. 4-7.
Numb. xix.
6, 13, 18.
Ezek. xxiv.
17.

Yet further, the Jewish leper was regarded as a living emblem of death. He has been called "a walking sepulchre." He was commanded "to bare his head," and "to cover his lip," just as one did who had come into contact with a corpse. The special rites for his purification were precisely identical with those appointed for such as had been defiled by the touch of death.

And as in the previous case, England here also accepted, in spirit at least, the legislation of the Jews. During the Middle Ages any one who suffered from this plague was treated as civilly dead; his

marriage tie was dissolved; he was clothed in a shroud, his funeral obsequies were performed, and even Masses were said for the repose of his soul. Ducange, s. Leprosi.

Now there was one feature in which leprosy had no parallel: no medicine could arrest or even mitigate the disease. It was regarded as a direct punishment inflicted by God, and, as such, incurable, save through the intervention of Him Who had sent it. 2 Kings v. 27. 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. This conception of it was inherent in the Jewish mind. It explains the question of the king of Israel, when he exclaimed on the receipt of the letter asking him to cure Naaman of this disease, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" 2 Kings v. 7, 15. It was the same conviction, too, that drew forth Naaman's confession, when he realised his cure, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." It is worthy of notice, for it lends a deep significance both to the action and the words of the leper who came to our Lord, kneeling down to Him, and saying, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." We can hardly suppose that a full knowledge of the Godhead of Jesus was vouchsafed to that poor outcast; but that sign of homage, and such a confession of belief in His power to heal, evidence the presence of a faith far beyond that of

his fellows, and it received a reward in an instantaneous response.

Now the method of healing adopted by our Lord is full of instruction. S. Mark says that He "was moved with compassion." It is unnoticed elsewhere, but it fitly finds a place in the records of one who loves to notice every trait of the Humanity of the Saviour.³

Then we read, He "put forth His hand, and touched him." Save for the priests alone, to touch the unclean was to become a partaker of his uncleanness. Jesus therefore by this act claimed the prerogative of the priesthood at the same time that He foreshadowed the Redemption in which He "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

S. Matt.
viii. 17.

The touch was followed by His word. "It is a sign of your faith," He seems to say, "that you use the expression 'If Thou wilt,' not 'If Thou canst.' I do will; and My hand is ever obedient to My will; be thou cleansed therefore by this touch." He spake, and it was done: for "immediately the leprosy departed from him."

Two directions followed the cure, one of expediency, the other of obligation; and they were given with a sternness that marked their importance and the peril of neglecting them. Our translation fails⁴

to express by "He straitly charged him" the force of the original; but one of the old versions rendered it more aptly, "He threatened him." In the first instance he was to say nothing about this cure to any one. Jesus often gave similar injunctions to those whom He had healed, in order to avoid publicity, but, when considered in its immediate connection with the command to go and show himself to the priests, its explanation here is probably to be found in a tender regard for the man rather than in any thought of Himself. The priests were very jealous of their office, and any, the least invasion of it would be resented. If any information of the cure should reach their ears before they had pronounced upon his cleanness, nothing was more likely than that they would refuse altogether to grant him the certificate of absolution. It was another proof of our Lord's loving-kindness and consideration, thus to provide that he should enjoy with all possible speed the privileges of restoration.

Trench
on the
Miracles,
233.

And what was the object of the second command, "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest"?

Leprosy, it must be remembered, inasmuch as it was the direst physical disease, and the culmination of misery, has always been regarded as a fitting type of sin. And it may have been that He Who "came

S. Chrysos.
de sacer-
dotio, iii.
S. Hieron.
in Matt. xvi.
Exhortation
in the Comm.
Office.

not to destroy, but to fulfil," looked on to the Ordinance of the Christian Priesthood, in which there would be by His appointment functions similar in kind, only higher in degree. Just as the leper was bidden to go again and again to the Jewish priest before he received his discharge, so in like manner it is provided that the sinner under the New Dispensation may seek the help and guidance of the Ministry of Christ's Church in ridding himself of the leprosy of sin.

And it is to be carefully noted how scrupulously the Church has preserved the analogy between the parts of God and the priest in the Mosaic Order with that of Christ and the Christian Priesthood in the present.

S. John
xx. 23.
2 Cor. v. 18.

God, and God alone, was the source of the leper's cure. He, and none but He, could take away the disease, but, in accordance with His ordaining, human agents were employed to seal the restoration. Even so in the cleansing from the defilement of sin, it is Christ's appointment that the message of forgiveness should be conveyed to the penitent by human lips. And if men are qualified to receive it, He in Whose Name and by Whose authority the words are pronounced will ratify and seal the pardon, according to that commission which He gave

to His first Ministry, under circumstances of unparalleled solemnity, when He breathed upon them to S. John
symbolise the delegation of His Own inherent power, ^{xx. 22, 23.}
and said, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them : and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

NOTES.

¹ *e.g.* Damascus, Nablus, Ramleh.

² The largest of these is said to have been at Burton-Lazars, near Melton-Mowbray. It is supposed that there were about a hundred in England. The disease seems to have died out in the country during the sixteenth century. There is an interesting treatise on Leprosy in the Speaker's Comm. on Lev. xiii.

³ Cf. i. 6.

⁴ ἐμβριμάσθαι implies a muttering, an emotion accompanied by noise. Lat. *fremo*. It is hardly translatable. Perhaps "sternly charged" is best.

⁵ It is often said that the power given to the Apostles was merely to preach, which would result in forgiveness or hardening : but that power had been intrusted to them before. This was probably even more than the "power of the keys," or "the binding and loosing," and for this reason was accompanied by the deeply significant act of breathing upon them. Absolution underlay the two former, but this was an authority for its direct exercise in and by itself. The three commissions imply teaching, legislating, and absolving.

IX.

The Paralytic Cured.

S. MARK II. 1-12.

1. And again He entered into Capernaum after *some* days ; and it was noised that He was in the house. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door : and He preached the word unto them. 3. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, *which* was borne of four. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was : and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7. Why doth this *Man* thus

speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before *them* all ; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw *it* on this fashion.

A DIFFICULTY will be removed if we realise the construction on which the more substantial houses in an Eastern town are not infrequently built. The ground-plan is that of a quadrangle. We enter at a door or gateway in the

centre, and pass into a court which is open to the sky. Usually there is a verandah or colonnade on one or more sides of it : sometimes of one story only, more frequently of two. When the latter is the case, its covering rises almost as high as the housetop itself. This is generally flat, and is used as a common place of resort ; in some streets there is a continued thoroughfare by it from end to end, with flights of steps at convenient places for public use.

Winer, Real-
Wörterbuch,
Art. 'Dach.'
Smith, Bibl.
Dict., Art.
'House.'

Josephus,
Antiq.
xiii. 5. 3.

On this occasion a group of persons—S. Mark, with his love of picturesque detail, gives the number as four—hearing that Jesus was speaking to the people in Simon's house, attempted to bring to Him a poor sufferer who had been struck with paralysis. But when they came near, they saw to their disappointment that the courtyard was thronged, and the very doorway choked with an eager crowd. They were not, however, easily baffled. They noticed the upturned faces of the multitude, and seeing the direction in which they were all looking, they gathered that Jesus was in the upper story of the verandah speaking to the people from the vantage-ground it gave Him. They made their way at once to the housetop by one of the public staircases, and soon found themselves only a few

feet above the spot where Jesus was standing. The roof of the verandah¹ was torn open, and the litter² on which their helpless patient lay was lowered through the opening and placed at His feet. And their end was gained. Nothing ever attracted the compassionate Saviour so surely as the sight of suffering. No matter what He was doing, that had the first claim on His attention. Again and again He allowed Himself to be interrupted, and broke off His speaking, without a sign of impatience, to heal the sick.

But there is something which strikes us with surprise in the words that He spoke—so unlike His usual utterances on similar occasions. “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” It reminds us of the inseparable connection between sin and suffering: “by sin came death,” and with death all its evil forerunners of pain and sorrow, sickness and disease. It would seem that the man was conscience-stricken. We are not told it in so many words, but what if that stroke of paralysis was the result of past excesses? What if the loss of vital energy in his limbs had been produced by a course of enfeebling indulgence? We can see his terror in the presence of the Great Searcher of men’s hearts, dreading disclosure, and yet longing to be healed. It is thus that in fear

Neander,
Life of
Christ, 272
Bohn.

and trembling he may have poured out his soul in confession of his guilt. S. Matthew hints at least at something of the kind, for he puts into our Lord's mouth such words of fatherly love and encouragement as a confession of this kind would naturally evoke, "Son, be of good cheer,"³ and then, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

And what followed? At once all the animosities of the Scribes and Pharisees were aroused. "Was not the forgiveness of sins one of the inalienable prerogatives of the Godhead? It is nothing less than blasphemy in Him to claim it." Such were their unspoken thoughts; but He Whose Divine claims they denied, established them in the very midst of their denial. For did He not read the secrets of their heart, and hear their unuttered murmurings, which none but God could do?

"I know your thoughts," He seems to say; "you accuse Me of pretending to extraordinary powers without any evidence that My claims are well founded. The veriest impostor, you say, may do that. No man has any right to speak so, unless he is prepared to verify his words by signs following. Who can possibly say whether the absolution you pronounce is ratified in heaven or not?"

And out of condescension to their secret murmur-

ings Jesus attests His powers. He works a miracle which the eyes of all can see, in proof that He possesses that which they denied to Him, because it carried with it no evident confirmation. "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, and take up thy bed."

He spake, and at once the man arose in presence of them all, and that "which before had been the sign of his sickness, became now the sign of his cure."

Now what may we learn from the different characters of those with whom this miracle brings us into contact—the Jewish rulers and the sick man's friends?

S. John
ii. 15; v. 8.

The Scribes could hardly as yet have witnessed much of Christ's wonder-working, for they came chiefly from Jerusalem,⁴ and that was not the scene of many miracles.⁵ The fame of His doings had doubtless reached them; otherwise they would not have travelled so far as Capernaum to see and hear what He did, but it was not for such as they to be convinced by mere hearsay. Were they not the recognised guardians of the religion of the nation, the teachers who sat in Moses' seat? They were in duty bound, then, to be jealous of all rival

claims, and not to suffer their office to be invaded by unauthorised intruders. Any assumption of supernatural power, with no visible proof that the claimant possessed it, was sure to provoke disparaging sneers, and they did hardly more than what we should probably have done under similar circumstances. But this only applies to their conduct in the beginning. When once He had furnished them with the credentials of His mission, with the incontestable signs which they demanded, there was no longer any excuse for their incredulity.

But turning from the Scribes to the poor man's friends, we read that "when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

We have already hinted at the probable confession of the sick man himself, and though this would have been sufficient to excite the compassion of Jesus, we have no right to ignore what the Holy Spirit has recorded, viz., that it was the sight of their⁶ faith which drew from His lips the words of forgiveness. It is a fact full of mystery, but full also of consolation, that not a few of the gifts of healing and restoration—on the centurion's servant S. Matt. viii. 13; ix. 18.—on Jairus' child—on the blind man at Bethsaida S. Mark vii. 29; viii. 22.—on the Syro-Phœnician's daughter—were obtained

through the faith and prayers, not so much of the sick and afflicted themselves, as of their relations and friends. Surely this dependence of man upon his fellow-creatures was intended to foreshadow the great mystery of Redemption through Another's Blood. It may well have been placed on record by the Holy Spirit to teach us that whenever we try to bring others to the feet of Jesus to be healed of their soul's sickness—be they friends or enemies—whenever we offer up “the prayer of faith,” which we are assured “shall save the sick,” we are associating ourselves in deeds of mercy and acts of intercession with the Great High Priest of the world—the One Mediator between God and man—the Man Christ Jesus, our Lord.

S. James
v. 15.

NOTES.

¹ There are fewer difficulties presented by this interpretation than by the others; but Trench, *Miracles*, 199, adopts the common theory. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 359, supposes that the roof was that over the *lewan*, composed of a layer of stiff mortar or clay upon some thickly-matted thorns. He imagines the house to have been only of one story. Edersheim, i. 502, confirms the writer in the view maintained above.

² The word is originally Latin, *grabatum*. S. Mark, writing primarily for Roman readers, uses many Latin words—e.g. *σπεκουλάτωρ*, *ξεστὸν*, *κεντυρίων*, *κῆνσος*, κ.τ.λ.

³ "Child, take courage," is a more literal rendering, and expresses more than the Authorised Version the above idea.

⁴ We learn from S. Luke v. 17 that some were present also from Galilee.

⁵ The only recorded miracles in Jerusalem before this are the Cleansing of the Temple (if it may be called a miracle), and that at the Pool of Bethesda.

⁶ Though the narrative speaks of "their" faith only, the perfect concurrence of the paralytic cannot be doubted.

X.

The Call of Levi.

S. MARK II. 13-17.

13. And He went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them. 14. And as He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. 15. And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there

were many, and they followed Him. 16. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How *is it* that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17. When Jesus heard *it*, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of *the* physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.

It was not an uncommon thing to assume a new name upon adopting a fresh calling. Simon was named Peter, Saul became Paul. In like manner, Levi, rejoicing in the change from a life of shame to one of glory and honour, signalised the step and the power by which it had been brought about, by calling himself Matthew, "the gift of God."¹ Comparing together the Synoptist Evangelists, we find that the first describes the call of Matthew, the second and third of Levi, under precisely similar circumstances, and there can scarcely be a question

S. Matt.
ix. 9.
S. Luke
v. 27.

of their identity. S. Chrysostom² so little doubted it that he used the variety of designation to illustrate an important principle, viz., that men should be as severe as they like towards themselves, but should draw a veil over the shame of others, and conceal their offences if followed by repentance. S. Mark and S. Luke, not wishing to blazon abroad the fact that the Apostle and Evangelist had belonged to the hated class of publicans, give him his old name, by which he had ceased to be known at the time when they wrote; but S. Matthew, thinking only of the goodness of God, and regarding himself as "a miracle of mercy," is careful to recall the fact, that he who is now the honoured Apostle was once the despised tax-gatherer.

In all the Roman Provinces, no doubt, it was considered a hardship to be compelled to pay taxes to the Imperial Treasury; but to the Jews it was inconceivably galling, because it entailed a surrender of their most cherished prerogative. To be called upon, again, to acknowledge their alien subjection at the bidding of their own countrymen,³ was to make the cup of bitterness a thousandfold more bitter. As God's chosen people they refused at heart to admit anything but a Theocracy. The arm of Rome was too strong to be resisted by open rebellion, but they

made no pretence of disguising their hatred of her authority. Her official publican was "the Pariah of Palestine." Nothing was too bad for him. He was an outcast from society; his offering was regarded as defiled and excluded from the Korban;⁴ his evidence was inadmissible in a court of justice; and contracts entered into with him were not binding on the conscience. "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" gathered up in a recognised proverb the idea that all communication with such an one must cease.

Lightfoot,
Exercit. in
Matt. v. 46.
Talm. Bab.
Synhedrim,
25 b.
S. Matt.
xviii. 17.

Notwithstanding all this, Christ chose a publican to be an Apostle and to wait on His Ministry. He found him at Capernaum, in his toll-booth on the shore of the lake, where it was his duty to take toll for the fisheries, and assess the value of merchandise passing through the port. Thus he belonged to a class of publicans especially hated,⁵ because extortion was more easily practised in custom-house dues than in the poll-tax, which was fixed. It finds expression in the Talmudic saying, "Woe to the ship which sails without having paid its dues."

Talm. Bab.
Abodah
Zarah. 10 b.

Now it is quite possible that the real turning-point in Levi's career was the cure of the paralytic. If he had witnessed that, his heart would be touched by the great stress laid upon the forgiveness of his

sins. It would awaken him to a realisation of that, which the common belief, that repentance was impossible to men of his calling, had made him forget; and he may then and there have resolved to break with the past on the first opportunity. The Evangelists, at any rate, have linked the two events most closely together, and followed up our Lord's public declaration of forgiveness with an even more forcible illustration, in His choice of "a publican and sinner" to be numbered with His disciples. "As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him." Porphyry and Julian assailed the truth of the narrative, on the ground that it was irrational to suppose that a man would quit a lucrative calling so suddenly at the bidding of a passer-by. But they made no allowance for the fame of Jesus, none for the magnetic influence of Him "Who spake as never man spake." It is very probable, too, that the lake-side had been the scene of His teaching often before,⁶ and that Levi's attention had been aroused by His burning words, as well as by the miracle which exhibited His pardoning mercy. And so the instant the right hand was held out, he eagerly grasped it, and left all behind.

Wordsworth,
Comm. in
Matt. ix. 9.

S. Matt.
ix. 10.
S. Luke
v. 29.

His first act was a manifestation of gratitude. His brother Evangelists record, what with singular modesty he veiled in his own account, that the "great feast" that followed was given by him. It marks the depth of his sincerity, that he lost no time in making an effort for the deliverance of his fellow-sinners. He invited as guests those who had shared his shame, in the hope that they might become partakers of his joy. It was doubtless a rude shock to Pharisaic prejudice that Jesus should accept the discipleship of a publican; but it must have raised a storm of reproach and anger that He should sit down to meat with a whole company of them, and that too, on one of the fast-days of the week.⁷ It gave rise at once to a twofold question, the first touching the principle of associating with sinners, the second on the propriety of observing the fasts. The former alone belongs to this portion of the narrative. "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"

Talm. Bab.
Baba
Kammah,
46 b.

Our Lord was ready with an answer. It was a recognised maxim in their oral law, and it had its echo in heathen⁸ writers in abundance, "The physician's sphere of work lies among the sick." Translated into the spiritual life, it says that the mission of the Redeemer is not to the righteous, but to

sinners, ay, to the very publicans from whom they had turned away. There is surely a severe rebuke to His gainsayers underlying the words. "You," He seems to say, "are the recognised guardians of the people, but 'the diseased have ye ^{Ezek.} not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which ^{xxxiv. 4.} was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.' I, on the contrary, 'am the Good Shepherd,' and care for My sheep. I have come to seek and to save that which was lost, and I rejoice more over this poor publican who confesses his sins, than over the ninety and nine who think themselves safe within the fold. 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"⁹

NOTES.

¹ The full name is Mattathias; Theodore, Doritheus, Theodotus, Adeodatus, and Nathanael, are all equivalents in different languages. A few of the Fathers refused to identify Levi and Matthew, but it is impossible to believe that two publicans could have been called at the same time and place, and that one should have become so famous and the other be no more heard of.

² This illustration is taken from Abraham's Festival Lectures, No. xxxv.

³ It was obviously advantageous generally to employ natives of the province, as better acquainted with the people and their occu-

pations. We may witness a faint image of the relationship of a Jew to the publican in that of an Irish tenant to an Irish agent employed by an English landlord to evict him.

⁴ This term was used of the offering, S. Mark vii. 11, and of the place where it was received, S. Matt. xxvii. 6.

⁵ Edersheim, i. 515-518, gives many particulars of the office, and says that Levi must have belonged to the Moches or *douanier* class, whose office was connected entirely with rates on merchandise. The ordinary publican was called Gabbai.

⁶ The original of verse 13 expresses this by the imperfect tense *ἤρχετο*, used to go, and *ἐδίδασκεν*, was wont to teach.

⁷ Cf. i. 78.

⁸ Stier mentions Antisthenes, Diogenes, Pausanias, and Ovid.

⁹ "To repentance" is absent from the best MSS.

XI.

The Principle of Fasting.

S. MARK II. 18-22.

18. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto Him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not? 19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20. But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away *from* the old, and the rent is made worse. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

It is almost certain that the feast given by Levi and attended by our Lord was on one of the two weekly fast-days. The word used by S. Mark implies not so much that the Pharisees "used to fast," as that they "were fasting" at the time; and it was the disregard of the observance which prompted the question why the disciples of Jesus acted differently from others in this respect. Now there can be no doubt that He would not have made light of any ordinance of legal obligation. Fasting was almost unnoticed in the Law. On one day, and one

S. Matt.
iii. 15;
v. 17.

Lev. xvi. 29.
Philo, de
Septen.

only, were the people directed "to afflict the soul." That was the "Day of Atonement." It was a national Fast, binding upon all who had reached the age of thirteen; and no Jew who was contented to follow the Mosaic Code need trouble himself with any other. During the Captivity, however, four more Annual Fasts were added to commemorate national disasters,¹ especially connected with the destructions of Jerusalem and the Temple. From time to time also public humiliations and private fasts were observed amidst dearth and famine, and in preparation for important works.

S. Hieron.
in Zech.
viii. 19.
Jer. xxxix. 1;
lii. 1.
2 Kings
xxv. 25.
Joel i. 14.
Mishnah,
Taanith.
2 Chron.
xx. 3.

In the New Testament we learn from the Pharisee's confession that the Jews "more righteous than the rest" kept two days in the week as fasts; they were the second and fifth, in remembrance of the ascent of Moses into the Mount to receive the Two Tables of Stone, and his descent, after the anger of the Lord had been appeased.

Talm. Bab.
Baba Kam-
mah, 2 a.
Tosaphoth
(catchword
כר).

But when we read in S. Matthew's Gospel of frequent fastings—"the Pharisees fast oft"—it is probable that it was something more even than these; and later Jewish writings testify to repetition on the most trivial pretexts, such as for a good omen, for a dream, for the interpretation of a dream; and this gave birth to the proverb, "A fast is as fit

for a dream as fire is for tow." They record also many cases of Rabbis who obtained a reputation by the number of their self-imposed fasts. Talm. Bab. Shabbath, 11 a.

When the Baptist came, he felt that it was a time to make ready a people by strict discipline and self-denial, not as a meritorious act or matter of boasting, such as the Pharisees taught, but as a fitting preparation for the Advent of the Messiah.

"There is a time to every purpose under heaven : a time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." The former was the season in which the Baptist's lot had been cast ; the latter, that which Christ came to inaugurate. Such was the broad distinction which our Lord drew when appealed to for a vindication of His conduct. He illustrated the principle by the use of a figure that was singularly appropriate to His hearers. They had heard their own master say that "the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice." Eccles. iii. 1, 4.
S. John iii. 29.

The friends of the bridegroom, or "the children of the bridechamber," as they are elsewhere called, were especially appointed to make preparation for the advent of the bride, to bear the bridal-canopy for her reception, and to arrange generally for the

Judges
xiv. 12.
S. Matt.
xxii. 11;
xxv. 6, 7.

wedding-feast. All their thoughts were of joy and happiness. For seven days there were prolonged festivities; fatlings were killed, costly dresses were worn, torchlight processions were held, and there was every possible demonstration of gladness; indeed, such was the festive character of the marriage-week, that exemption was granted to the bride even from certain obligations of the great Fast of "the Day of Atonement," if it fell within that period.²

Mishnah,
Yoma viii. 1.

"The present," our Lord seems to say to those who questioned Him, "is such a time as that. What more incongruous than for My friends to seek to mar their enjoyment by introducing an air of sadness into such a scene? The time will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away;³ but do not anticipate the separation; it will be here all too soon. The darkness of Calvary will spread a gloom over the disciples' hearts: then there will be an end to rejoicing: 'then shall they fast in those days.'"

S. Matt.
ix. 15.

Two more illustrations followed: one touching the outward conduct, the other the inner spirit; and both were suggested by the Wedding Feast. "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment." Christianity is too strong and vigorous for an outworn system. Attempt to piece it on the old, and

its very weight and strength will tear still more the failing threads, and "a worse rent will be made."

Again, "no man putteth new wine into old bottles." The New Religion is too free, too elastic, too expansive, to be infused into the old forms and modes of life. It will be like the fermenting must, which cracks and bursts the withered wine-skins, so that both are ruined.

We must not however conclude from this, that Christ forbade, or even discouraged, the principle of fasting. It was the Jewish surroundings which He condemned. Rabbinic Pharisaism had wholly misconceived its true object; it had taught men to believe that such mortification was a means of averting God's anger, and of atoning for sins. To the Pharisees it was no instrument for the subjection of the lower to the higher nature, no ingredient in the cup of penitence, no sign of deep humiliation for offence against God, but a meritorious act, entitling him who practised it to Divine acceptance. As such it gained no encouragement, no recognition, in the teaching of our Blessed Lord.

S. Matt.
vi. 16, 17.

Neither did He approve their mode of fasting. The spirit of the Gospel is not the spirit of the Law. The one is love, the other is fear. The Jew

sat in sackcloth and ashes ; the Christian anoints his head and washes his face.

We have only to turn to the Sermon on the Mount to understand the real position of fasting. Its true value was fully recognised when our Lord united it in a threefold cord with the Christian graces of prayer and almsgiving, and pointed thereby to man's triple duty to God, his neighbour, and himself. In enjoining the obligation of fasting, He knew that if it be true that no one can enjoy liberty till he has learned self-restraint, it is absolutely necessary for the full realisation of Christian freedom that a man should be able to hold his lower appetites in complete subjection.

But fasting in its highest sense reaches far beyond the abstinence from bodily food ; the rule is absolute, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself." S. Bernard shows well what it is which makes the Christian "ascetic." "If," he says, "the appetite alone have sinned, let that alone fast ; but if other members, let them also fast. The eye from . . . looking with pleasure at any glass which reflects self ; the ear from praise of self, from slanders, gossip, controversy ; the tongue from detraction, murmuring, and fault-finding ; the hand from needless work, which hinders

prayer; but more than all, the soul from vice and self-will. Thus only shall we avoid provoking God to reject our offerings; thus only realise what is promised: 'Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure.'"

NOTES.

¹ In the fourth month, both for the breaking of the Two Tables of Moses, and also for the capture of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's reign. In the fifth, for the burning of the Temple of Nebuchadnezzar. In the seventh, for the death of Gedaliah. In the tenth, for the commencement of the blockade.

² She shared with a king the privilege of washing the face at such a time; the idea being that before all things she must be pleasing to her husband. After they had been married some time he would know that she was not unclean, but at first she must run no risk of such a thing being supposed.

³ This is the first intimation of His approaching death.

XII.

The Disciples in the Corn-fields.

S. MARK II. 23-28.

23. And it came to pass, that He went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25. And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were

with him? 26. How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 27. And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the sabbath: 28. therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath.

THERE are reasons for supposing that it was
S Luke vi. 1. after the synagogue service on the first Sabbath in the month of May that our Lord went out to walk in the fields, where the harvest was ripening in the Plain of Gennesareth.¹ Perhaps He wished for quiet; but the Pharisees, whose hostility He had aroused, watched which way He went, and followed behind, determined to lose no opportunity of fastening upon Him a charge, to lay before the Sanhedrim. It is not unlikely that their hope on this occasion was, that He might be tempted to exceed the legitimate

two thousand cubits, in disregard of the restriction for a Sabbath-day's journey. Edersheim,
Temple, etc.
148.

Disappointed, however, in not finding anything against the Master, they attacked His disciples. They were hungry, and plucked some ears of corn by the wayside, and ate them. There was no offence in that: it was no act of theft on their part, for the Law made allowances for such a case: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand." Deut.
xxiii. 25.
Talm. Baba
Metzia, 92 a

But though it was no infraction of the Written Law, there was "the hedge" of the Law, the fence which the Rabbis had built up to guard its minutest observance. This they could turn and twist at their will; and they had no difficulty in bringing the disciples' conduct into court for a breach of it. To pluck the ears of corn was equivalent to reaping; to rub them in their hands was the same as threshing; and to reap and thresh was to engage in prohibited labour on the Sabbath. If then they could make good the charge, and enforce the extreme penalty, like the man who gathered sticks on that holy day, the transgressors might be stoned for the breach. It Numb. xv.
35, 36. shows the eagerness with which they were watched, that the instant they began to do it the Pharisees broke in with their remonstrances: "Behold! why

do they on the Sabbath-day that which is not lawful?"

Josephus,
Antiq. xii.
6. 2.

It was the boast of the stricter Jews that they would endure any privation rather than violate that holy day. More than one great defeat and massacre in Jewish history² might have been averted if they had not refused on these grounds to draw the sword in defence of their lives.

Jesus at once threw the shield of His protection over His followers. Scorning the petty quibbles with which He was so familiar, He declined to argue as to what constituted labour, and plunged into the general question of Sabbath observance, laying down the principle that no ceremonial ordinance may override man's good.

1 Sam.
xxi. 1-6.

With one of those master-strokes which He so often made, He recalled to their minds an illustration from the history of their greatest hero. It is quite possible that it was suggested by the Lesson which they had just heard in the synagogue; if so, we can imagine with what force it must have struck them.

David, in his flight from Saul's court, halted at the priestly station of Nob on the sides of Mount Olivet. It was the spot where the Tabernacle had found a temporary home during the period of its wanderings before it rested on Mount Zion. Ahime-

lech or Abiathar (the two names are commonly supposed to represent father and son, but it is possible that they were both borne by one and the same person³) gave him some of the loaves from the Golden Table to satisfy his hunger. It was the most sacred of all food: for while that which was offered in sacrifice might be sold in the shambles, the mystic "Bread of the Face"⁴ was eaten by the priests alone, and within the Holy Place. And yet they, the guardians of every religious observance, had not hesitated to divert its use in the exigency of circumstances, and David, the great national saint, had made no scruple of accepting it.

Were the Pharisees prepared to accuse him of sacrilege for so doing? If they were, our Lord might have retorted that they were at issue with the teaching of the old masters of Israel. Had not they said, "It was lawful even to eat that which was sanctified, when another loaf was not within reach, and one was bitten with hunger;" and again, "There is nothing which may hinder taking care of life but idolatry, adultery, and murder"? ¹ Chron. xxiv. 6.
² Sam. viii. 17.

But we find from S. Matthew, that He drew a second argument from the Temple ordinances. Kimchi on
¹ Sam. xxi. 7
"What," He seems to say, "were the multiplied sacrifices, and incense-burnings, and washings, but S. Matt. xii. 5

Talm. Bab.
Pesachim,
65 a.

so many breaches of the letter of the Law? Had they not given birth to the proverb, 'There is no Sabbatical rest observed in the sanctuary'? and yet no one ever thought of blaming the priests."

And just as under the first illustration there lay the thought that He was David's Son, and that what was lawful for the father, could not be unlawful for the Son, so by the assertion that there was in that place "One greater than the Temple," He reminded them "that the Body of the Son of Man was the truest temple of God, and the disciples who ministered to Him were entitled to at least the same privilege as the priests in the Temple at Jerusalem."

But the real solution of the question lay in the declaration that the day was instituted for the happiness and wellbeing of man, and consequently He in Whom humanity was personified, held control over its observance; "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The question has been revived in our own generation: "In what spirit is that day which has superseded the Sabbath to be kept, especially by the working classes?" This no less than the other "was made for man." Now man, it must be remembered, is a complex creature. He has a tripartite nature,

Olshausen,
de Nat. Hum.
Trichotomia.

consisting of body, soul, and spirit; and it is necessary to provide for him as such, not ignoring either his physical or his social or his religious needs. All must be kept in view. It is a manifest duty to furnish the masses with the means of bodily recreation, and to draw them from their squalid homes into the pure air which will invigorate the frame.

It is no less a duty to elevate their tastes, to offer them, as far as possible, variety of scene, and that relief from the monotony of labour which the rich man finds in his club or library; but all must be subordinated to the paramount duty of worship. That is due from every creature to the Great Creator. It is that moreover in which he may find his highest enjoyment. No scheme, therefore, which ignores this claim, can possibly carry out the principle laid down by our Lord when He said, "The Sabbath was made for man."

NOTES.

¹ The synagogue service was held at nine o'clock. The Pharisees would hardly have gone out after Him into the fields before that hour, but nothing is more natural than that they should have followed Him when the congregation separated. The Authorised Version renders it "the second Sabbath after the first," which is meaningless. A variety of explanations have been offered, viz., that given above (Wetstein); the first Sabbath after the second Paschal Day (Edersheim) appears most probable. It was certainly

between Passover and Pentecost. Barley harvest was in the latter half of April, wheat in the first half of May.

² Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 4. 2, 3, describes how the Romans under Pompey mercifully respected the Jewish law, and refused to attack till the following day.—Milman, *Hist.* ii. 2. The Jews however did not always observe the rule.—Wars, ii. 19. 2.

³ Surely, as there is nothing impossible in the supposition, it is better to accept it than accuse the authors of Chronicles and Samuel of mistake. The absence of the definite article from the best mss. forbids the translation “in the time of Abiathar (afterwards familiarly known as) the high priest,” as, *e.g.* “in the house of Simon the leper”—not a leper at the time. Grammatically, as it stands, it can only be “when Abiathar was high priest.”

⁴ *i.e.* Bread laid out in the Presence of God. Our Shewbread is taken from Luther’s translation “Schaubrod.” The table of pure gold is depicted on the Arch of Titus. The Bread was only eaten by those priests who were ceremonially clean.

XIII.

The Withered Hand.

S. MARK III. 1-6.

1. And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.
2. And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him.
3. And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.
4. And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

FOR the third time our Lord is confronted by the Pharisees on the question of Sabbath observance. A week has elapsed since He defended the action of His disciples from their objections to plucking the ears of corn; and now they are waiting for an opportunity to renew the charge of breaking the Law. It was either in the synagogue at Capernaum, from which they had followed Him the previous Sabbath, or possibly it may have been in the neighbouring Sepphoris,¹ which Herod had lately made his capital, and where one of the five Sanhe-

Ritter,
Compar.
Geogr.
iv. 376.

Sepp. ii. 332.
Von Ammon,
ii. 146.

drims held its sittings, that He saw a man whose hand had been withered, and had lost its power. It is interesting to find from S. Jerome, who quotes from some apocryphal additions to S. Matthew's Gospel, that he was by trade "a stone-mason, who had depended for his livelihood on manual labour, and that he pleaded for the cure to avoid the disgrace of begging his bread."

S. John
vii. 49.

If this tradition be a true one (and there is no reason to doubt it), then we can understand that the circumstance of his poverty would tend to aggravate the bitterness of the Pharisees. They could not bear that Jesus should bestow favour upon the labouring class, because they held the poor in the lowest contempt, and regarded ignorance as an unpardonable offence. "The rabble, that know not the law, are accursed." His partiality to them was consequently a great blow to Pharisaic pride; and we are not surprised that the common people rejoiced in the change of treatment that they received, and flocked to His feet, and "heard Him gladly."

Now, no sooner did the Pharisees become aware of the poor man's presence in the synagogue, than they were filled with satisfaction. They felt sure from what had taken place before, that Jesus would

be prompted to heal him, and would break the Sabbath in doing so. They determined, therefore, simply to bide their time, and, like beasts of prey, to pounce upon Him directly He should fall into their toils. They had attacked the man who had carried his bed, then the disciples in the field, but now they have Christ Himself almost within their grasp.

They had heard wonderful things of Him, but they little knew that He could read their thoughts, that their inmost heart was laid bare and open before His all-searching eye, and their excitement must have become intense when He uttered the command, "Stand forth." It was a compassionate effort on His part to change their hearts by the sight of the man's helpless infirmity, and to prick their callous consciences. But there was no sign of relenting, no turn in the current of their malignant intentions, and so the question was directly put, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" The man was not in danger of his life, and he would have survived undoubtedly had no cure been wrought. But that question implied, that not to give health and strength, not to restore the vital power when the restoration lies within your reach, is equivalent to taking it

away. To leave a good deed undone is hardly less sinful than doing a bad one. Such was no doubt the direct force of the question which our Lord put ; but it is extremely probable that beneath the broad principle thus laid down He covered an allusion to the designs of the Pharisees upon His Own life. And if their hearts had not been hardened against every influence, those words would have carried to their conscience such an alternative as this : “ Which, think you, is in reality the better thing,—to restore life and energy to this withered limb, or to destroy Me, as I know full well you are so eager to do ? ” But He received no answer. The sight of the poor maimed cripple imploring mercy, and the Saviour’s question, to which there was but one reply, both alike failed to make any impression. “ They held their peace.” Then He “ looked round with anger and grief.” The notice of this incident is due to S. Mark alone, who is always so careful to make mention of “ the passing lights and shadows which swept over the countenance of the Lord.”² In the original language it is something more than grief ; it is the grief of sympathy ; and it creates a difficulty at first sight, there seems something so contradictory in the combination of anger and sorrow and sympathy. But it is only in sinful fallen man that they

appear incompatible. There was no malice in the anger of Christ. He was angry with the sin, but grieved for the sinner. His indignation was roused, not by any offence that had been given to Himself, or by any personal injury; and His sympathy was exhibited by an act of kindness naturally calculated to win them to repentance. With a look, then, of sorrowful, sympathetic anger, He bade the helpless cripple stretch forth his hand, and at once the heart sent its streams of blood into every vein and artery of the palsied limb. "It was restored whole as the other."

It can hardly have been by accident that our Lord should have healed him without any actual work, any visible effort on His part. We know with what infinite variety He effected His purposes. At one time He made clay and anointed S. John ix. 6. the eyes of the blind, or touched with His hands the tongue of the dumb or the ears of the deaf; at another He merely spake and it was done. It was S. Mark vii. 33; x. 52. surely of set purpose that He adopted the latter course in the case before us. It threw an additional obstacle in the way of the Pharisees. It was not words, but deeds that were forbidden in the Law on the Sabbath-day; and when He said, "Stretch forth thy hand," the strictest Sabbatarian could lay no

hold upon Him. There was no actionable breach, no violation even of the letter of the Law. What, then, were the baffled Pharisees to do? Exposure of sin is usually followed by one of two alternatives,—repentance, or more determined perseverance in the evil way. It creates no surprise to find that the Pharisees accepted the latter of the two. S. Luke expresses the bitterness of their disappointment when he says that they were filled with madness, and S. Mark leaves no doubt of the aggravation of their malicious designing in the record that “they went forth and

S. Luke vi. 6. straightway took counsel with the Herodians³ against Him, how they might destroy Him.” The coalition is so remarkable that it calls for consideration. No two classes could be found more widely separated either in political or in religious views.

In politics the Pharisees resolutely denied the right of any foreign power to exercise dominion over the heritage of God. Nothing but a Theocracy could be tolerated by a Jew. Prudence restrained them from revolution, but they lost no opportunity of protesting vigorously against the payment of taxes to the Imperial Treasury.

Josephus,
Antiq.
xiv. i. 3.

The Herodians were of Idumæan descent, but from long connection with Rome had become Roman in feeling and political sentiment, and exercising

their authority only as vassals, they were careful to uphold the claims of the Sovereign.

In religion again there was an equally marked antagonism between the two parties.

The Separatists were the unflinching champions of the national faith, as they received it, and they upheld the Ritual and Ceremonial Law with the most rigid formalism. The Herodians, on the other hand, as far as they professed any religion at all, were Sadducees, altogether sceptical of a future life, and caring for little beyond a rationalistic morality.

The proud Jewish patriot and the half-heathen Herodian courtier—the scrupulous Religionist and the indifferent Secularist—such were the widely-conflicting spirits that were made friends together in this unrighteous cause.

It proves almost more conclusively than any other testimony the low estate into which all parties in Jewish society had sunk, that the principles which Christ preached found no response in the tenets of any of them; for sooner or later, here or elsewhere, all alike took counsel together and became confederate against Him.

NOTES.

¹ If here, the meeting of Pharisees and Herodians would be more easily accounted for.

² Cf. Characteristics of S. Mark, i. 6.

³ The Herodians are referred to only in S. Matt. xxii. 16, S. Mark iii. 6, xii. 13, and S. Luke xx. 20, and it is very difficult to describe their exact position. Dr. Westcott, in Smith's Bibl. Dict., suggests that they were brought into union with the Pharisees as supporters of a dynasty which saved the Jews from direct heathen rule ; and with the Sadducees, as holding a faith which was as it were a compromise between the belief of God's chosen people and that of heathen civilisation. I have looked for the motives of coalition simply in the desire to obtain one's end even through the assistance of one's natural enemies. It is very difficult to think the Pharisees could have felt any sympathy with the Herodians, when the Herods persistently appointed non-Palestinians to the High Priesthood. Some of the Herodians, moreover, held that the Messianic predictions were fulfilled in the Herodian dynasty, which was a view wholly antagonistic to Pharisaic belief.

XIV.

The Ordination of the Twelve.

S. MARK III. 7-19.

7. But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea : and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judæa, 8. and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan ; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. 9. And He spake to His disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. 10. For He had healed many ; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. 11. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12. And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known.

13. And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto *Him* whom He would : and they came unto Him. 14. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, 15. and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils : 16. and Simon He surnamed Peter ; 17. and James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ; and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder : 18. And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19. and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him.

And they went into an house.

THIS is the third stage in the preparation of the disciples for the Apostolate. A certain number had been admitted at the beginning to terms of intimacy and friendship with Jesus. Then they had left their secular calling for a time to attend upon

S. John
i. 40-49.

Him; now the final step must be taken, and a selection made of such as would give themselves wholly to the work, and go no more back to the world.

It was a crisis in His ministry; and, as the pattern Man, He prepared Himself for it by prayer. S. Mark only tells us of His ascent into the mountain—the Kurun Hattin,¹ from which He preached His first sermon—but S. Luke, who is careful to note the marks of His Priestly work, adds that it was to spend the night in intercession and communing with the Father.

Robinson,
Pal. ii. 370.
Stanley,
Sin. and
Palest. 368.
S. Luke
vi. 12.

It is in imitation of her Lord that the Church, from the ordination of S. Matthias to the present time, has proceeded to “the laying on of hands” only after prayer and fasting and the invocation of the Holy Ghost.

The twelve Apostles are divided by the Evangelists into three groups. In the first are SS. Peter and James and John and Andrew. They formed two pairs of brothers, sons of Jonah and Zabdai; and not only were their homes in the same town, but the families were united by partnership in trade.

Three of the four are linked together by a golden chain as the favoured company, “the chosen out of the chosen,” to whom was granted the companion-

ship of their Master in the most solemn events of His life—on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane. Andrew had been the first to follow Christ, the first to believe the Baptist's cry, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and he was so loyal to the Master, that almost all that we read of him in his individual actions, is concerned with bringing others to His feet; and yet, notwithstanding all this, there was something—we know not what—that excluded him from the inner circle.

S. John i. 42;
vi. 9;
xii. 20-22.

The second group is composed of SS. Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. Of the first but little is recorded. "He was a sincere but timid seeker after truth," and as such our Lord appealed to him when He spoke of "anything hard to be done or believed," hoping thereby to inspire him with strength and confidence. Bartholomew, whose full title was, in all probability, Nathanael² Bar Tolmai, stands out as a marked man in that early history; in an age of duplicity rarely equalled, he maintained, even before the shadow of Christ fell upon him, a character of such childlike simplicity that he was hailed by One Who can read the hearts of men, as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." S. Matthew, the Levi³ of the first Gospel, was the lowest in the

S. John
vi. 5, 6;
xiv. 9, 10.

S. John
i. 47.

social scale, in a company where probably none were men of birth or position.

S. Thomas, also called Didymus, the Twin, was the most despondent, the slowest to believe, the last of the Twelve to be convinced, but true and honest to the core. When once his doubts were cleared away, and the pathway of duty was open, nothing could exceed the intensity of his devotion.

The third group contains the rest.

S. James, by a mistaken interpretation dating even from S. Jerome, has been generally known as "the Less;"⁴ but in reality he was designated by the Evangelists, "the little," and that, not from any inferiority of position or ability, but simply because, like Zacchæus, he was small of stature.

S. Hieron.
in Matt. x.

Next to him in the usual order is the Apostle "of the triple name."⁵ He was called by his parents Judas, but probably after that had become a name of evil omen, he received other distinguishing titles, and is described in the narrative as the brother of James, or as Lebbæus, the warm-hearted and lion-like man, or by S. Mark as Thaddæus, from a certain feminine tenderness, which controlled and tempered the force and strength of his natural character.

The third was S. Simon, the Kananite; not of the

land of Canaan, but, as the Syriac word implies, "the Zealot." It marks his connection with a band of Galileans, who held their lives in their hand for the defence of the Mosaic Ritual and "the Covenant of their fathers." In the last days of Jerusalem they degenerated into a desperate faction, and wrought endless mischief, rapine, and bloodshed, during the final struggle with the Roman army. In the zeal and enthusiasm which led Simon to cast in his lot with such a cause, our Lord discerned a qualification which, if once diverted into a proper channel, would prove of the greatest value in the spread of Christianity.

The list closes with one of the tribe of Judah—strange to say, the only member of it in the number of the Twelve. He was born at the little village of Kerioth, and called by a fearful paradox, Judah, Josh. xv. 25. "the praise of the Lord." He bears on his forehead the ineffaceable brand, and is the only one of whom it has ever been said, "Good were it for that man if S. Mark xiv. 27. he had never been born."

Such, briefly told, were the men who were associated with the Founder of the Faith for the regeneration of the world. The first general thought suggested by this consideration is of the manifold variety, both of character and of calling, represented in the Twelve.

Where in the whole world could we find dispositions more diverse than in S. Peter and S. John,—the one ardent and impulsive, the very embodiment of energy and vehemence; the other quiet and contemplative, fitted for nothing so well as the life of a recluse?

What callings again could be more incongruous than those which S. Simon and S. Matthew had respectively chosen? The fiery patriot could brook no allegiance to an earthly ruler, but would do and dare anything to resist the Roman claim to impose taxation upon the people of God. But his fellow-Apostle had degraded himself, of his own free will, to exact from his own flesh and blood the obnoxious tribute. And yet such was the comprehensive work which lay before the Ministry of the Church, that a sphere was found in it for the “tax-gatherer,” no less than the “tax-hater,”—for the Jew who had sold his birthright, as well as for the irreconcilable nationalist. Jew and Greek, bond and free, rich and poor, men of every type and people, were destined to be embraced in the Catholic Church; and Jesus Christ foreshadowed the future when He welded together the most discordant elements in that first society of the Twelve Apostles.

Another thought of scarcely less importance arises out of the social position from which He

made His choice. The Jewish Rabbis estimated the weight of their influence by the rank or wealth or learning of the pupils who sat at their feet. The first Teacher of Christianity aimed, on the contrary, at attracting the poorest of men. It may be urged that He had no alternative; that men in the position of Joseph and Nicodemus were so reluctant to accept the call, that had He waited for their adherence, the Apostolic Roll would never have been filled up in His lifetime. But His choice of the poor and despised, the ignorant and unlearned, was based upon a principle which governed the whole of His life on earth; which selected for His birthplace the manger of a wayside khan, for His home a humble cottage, and for His early occupation the trade of an artisan, among a people intellectually of the lowest type in Palestine. It was in perfect consistency with all that had gone before, that He should associate with Himself for the work of the Ministry men of the humblest rank, who probably knew little more than their letters, and, judged by a human standard, were worthless for that unto which they were called.

And it was the same throughout, till at His departure out of the world He made the Sacraments, by which His Presence⁶ was to be continued, the

exact counterparts of the simplicity and plainness of His life in the flesh. One period of history will suffice to demonstrate the wisdom of His choice. For the first three centuries the progress of Christianity was a gradual triumph of the lowly over the great, till, by the irresistible might of its weakness, it shook the world and compelled "the master of legions" to cast his crown at the foot of the Cross.

1 Cor.
i. 27-29.

And so the Apostle's boast was realised: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence."

NOTES.

¹ The Latin Church has adopted the tradition that it was on a plateau of the "Horns of Hattin," not far from the Khan Minyeh, on the western shore of the lake.

² The grounds upon which the identification of Nathanael with Bartholomew rest are these: S. John places Nathanael in the earliest group of Jesus' followers, and names him with certain Apostles after the Resurrection, but he makes no mention of Bartholomew. The Synoptists, on the other hand, place Bartholomew in the List of Apostles, but take no note of Nathanael. Again, S. John states that Nathanael was brought to Jesus by

Philip, and in the Synoptists Philip and Bartholomew are always associated together. It is hard to believe that the follower most highly spoken of at the beginning by Jesus should have been excluded from the Apostleship. S. Augustine, however, disputed the identity, and conjectured a reason for the rejection of Nathanael.

³ S. Matthew gives an account of the call of a "man named Matthew;" SS. Mark and Luke of Levi, under precisely similar circumstances. Matthew, like Theodore, Adeodatus, Dorotheus, implying "the gift of God," probably was the name he assumed after his call.

⁴ Cf. the discussion on "the Brethren" in xvi., pp. 116 ff.

⁵ Lebbæus, from the Hebrew *leb*, the heart; according to others, from *labi*, a lion. Thaddæus, from *thad*, the female breast.

⁶ This expression may be justified in regard to Baptism, by the belief that in both Sacraments we have "an extension of the Incarnation."

XV.

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

S. MARK III. 20-30.

20. And *the* multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21. And when His friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself. 22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils. 23. And He called them unto *Him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house

cannot stand. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27. No man can enter into a strong *man's* house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29. but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

S. Matt.
xii. 23.

THE popularity of our Blessed Lord was rapidly on the increase. The crowds were becoming so eager to see and hear, so desirous for the relief of their wants and infirmities, that they left Him no time to Himself, not even "so much as to eat bread."

Hitherto His progress had been impeded only by enemies, but now a new element of opposition springs up. "His friends," including no doubt His kinsfolk and "brethren," who had as yet the most

inadequate conception of His Mission, tried to interpose. They looked upon His indifference to bodily necessities as a mark of fanaticism, and feared that if it were left unchecked the consequences might be fatal. It is evident, however, from what follows later that their interference was wholly disregarded. But before their objections had been silenced, He was confronted by a deputation of ecclesiastics from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. They had no doubt been carefully prepared with the arguments they were to use, and the line of action to pursue. It would be quite useless to deny His power over evil spirits, because hardly a day passed without some exhibition of it being witnessed. His influence with the people must be secretly undermined, and so they adopted the course of going about amongst them, and by covert insinuation or open assertion leading them to believe that He was in league with Beelzebub.

Who this exactly was is wrapped in some obscurity. Originally perhaps a Phœnician god, he has been variously regarded as the lord of flies, the lord of the dwelling, or the prince of idolatry, as some hold in accordance with Talmudic interpretation.¹ But, whatever may have been the real significance of the appellation, its usage in Holy Scripture is associated

² Kings
i. 2.
Lightfoot,
Exerc. in
Matt.
xii. 24.

exclusively with demoniacal possession. It is quite possible that it is due to this circumstance, that, when that strange phenomenon passed away the use of the title was wholly discontinued.

It does not appear that the Scribes accused our Lord to His face of employing such agency, but He read their thoughts, perhaps heard their whispered innuendos, and, calling them up before Him, began at once to rebut the charge. We cannot fail to be struck by the total absence of personal anger, or pride, or indignation, such as one would naturally expect under such gross misrepresentation. The strength of His position inspired Him with the utmost calm and confidence; and He told them that their suggestion was refuted by the commonest observation. No kingdom, no society, no house nor family, could possibly hold together if its members were disunited. "That goes almost without saying." If then they carried their thoughts on for a moment from the earthly to the spiritual, from the kingdom of men to the dominion of the Evil Spirit, they would see the inconsistency of their allegation. That kingdom, like every other, was governed by a prince; he had subordinate officers under him to carry out his orders, and see that his rule was obeyed. It was quite inconceivable that he could be found co-

operating with any other power for their overthrow. Such an element of disunion must end in dissolution, for a more self-destructive process could not be conceived, than that a man should take up arms and turn them against himself. "If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end."

He then proceeds to show that their admission that the devils had been cast out by Him was proof positive that He had bound their prince ; for unless the strong man had been restrained, he would never have suffered himself to have his goods and spoils taken away from him.

But, although Jesus was able to reason with His opponents in this calm unimpassioned argument, He did not let them go till He had pierced them through with a terrible denunciation and warning against the inevitable consequence of persistence in their present course.

Men rebuked Him again and again for His birth and parentage, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of S. Mark Mary?" and there was something to be urged in ^{vi. 3.} excuse for their ignorant wonder ; but to charge Him with casting out devils by Satanic agency, with doing by the power of evil what He had wrought by the Spirit of God, admitted of no palliation. It was ■

crime of such gravity, betraying a condition of mind so persistently, so hopelessly wicked, that the man who committed it stood guilty of an eternal sin.² The door of mercy was closed against him, and neither on this side of the grave, nor in the unclothed state, was it possible that he should ever hear the words of pardon and peace. Three thoughts, all calculated to inspire us with comfort, arise out of a careful consideration of this tremendous utterance.

Firstly, if our Lord chose to magnify the heinousness of this particular sin by designating it "eternal," or as we find in the parallel passage from S. Matthew's Gospel, by assuring His hearers that it should "not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," it follows of necessity that there is at least the possibility of forgiveness for some sins after death. It is difficult to believe that He would have run the risk of using an expression so likely to mislead, and so certain to be laid hold of by those who held erroneous doctrine on the subject, and to be employed in a manner destructive of the truth. It would seem, however, from a consideration of primitive testimony, that it was held to apply only to the pardon of sins of infirmity, and the effacement of sinful stains.³

S. Matt.
xii. 32.

S. Aug.
de Civ.
xxi. 24. 2.
S. Isid.
de Offic.
Eccl. 18.
After Death,
71-73.

Secondly, He did not directly say that the people whom He was addressing had committed the unpardonable sin. They were doubtless on the edge of that awful condition, and if they suffered the malignity of their heart to lead them to a persistent repetition of the charge, after its folly had been exposed, nothing might save them from the abyss of destruction. If His words implied what has been too hastily assumed, it detracts from that readiness to forgive, that free and open offer of pardon for every returning sinner, which we love to associate with the Saviour's mission.

And, thirdly, we realise the necessity of carefully avoiding any confusion between sin and blasphemy. Men have fallen into a thoughtless way of characterising that which Jesus denounced in such terrible terms as "sin" against the Holy Ghost. All blasphemy is sin, but all sin is not blasphemy; and it is quite clear that He intended to draw the distinction in this passage. "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme" (not he that shall sin) "against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (R.V.).

The importance of the distinction lies in this: Our bodies are by Baptism made "temples of the

1 Cor.
iii. 16, 17;
vi. 19.

Holy Ghost," and every sin against the body, every act of impurity, and every unhallowed thought, is an offence against Him that dwelleth therein.

Gal. v.
22, 23.

Again, the works of the Spirit are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and by every act of consent to those qualities which are antagonistic to these we do despise to Him Who worketh in us.

It has been through confounding such like transgressions with that blasphemy against which the Pharisees were warned, that men have yielded to despair, and made shipwreck of their safety. But we nowhere find that any one of these is regarded as such a deadly sin that it should close every avenue of the offender's soul against the return of grace.

Indeed, it may be doubted whether there is now any such absolutely unpardonable offence possible.⁴ It is only too obvious that there is an obstinate persistence in sinful living, which practically deprives a man of power to repent; but this is a very different thing from saying that there is a definite transgression, such as our Lord was speaking of, which at once and for ever excludes the transgressor from the possibility of pardon. Experience shows that we may fall so low by wilfully resisting grace and despising the offer of forgiveness, that there is

nothing left but “a fearful looking for of judgment.”

We may reach a condition in which, as S. John ^{1 S. John v. 16.} implies, it will be useless to pray for us. But since an all-sufficient Atonement has been made, we would fain believe that whosoever will, whatever the nature of his sin, may find “a place of repentance,” if he seek it “carefully with tears.”

NOTES.

¹ Beelzebub. The LXX. and Josephus both connect him with flies, Βάαλ μυῖαν; perhaps from the Hebrew *zebel*, dung, the dung-fly; others from *zebul*, a habitation, make him *οικοδεσπότης*, S. Matt. x. 25. Others again, from a secondary Hebrew sense of *zebel*, an idol, interpret the name as “the prince of false gods or idols,” from which the transition to ἀρχὼν τῶν δαιμονίων, “the chief of the devils,” is very natural. S. Luke xi. 15.

² It can hardly be doubted that the reading *κρίσεως* was substituted for the more difficult ἀμαρτήματος of the best MSS.

³ Cf. the author's After Death, 71-73 and 117-126.

⁴ Cf. S. Aug. Serm. lxxi.; Waterland, Serm. xxviii.; Pusey, Serm. Sin against the Holy Ghost, for the opposite view.

XVI.

The Lord's Brethren.

S. MARK III. 31-35.

31. There came then *His* brethren and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. 32. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee. 33. And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren? 34. And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren. 35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother.

It has been much debated what the exact relationship of the so-called "brethren" of our Lord really was. Their names have been preserved as James and Joses, Judah and Simon. Mainly in consequence of the identity of three of them with those of three Apostles, the idea sprang up (though not till the fourth century), and obtained wide currency in the West, that certain of them were of the number of "the Twelve," and that all were sons of Mary the wife of Alphæus, not brethren at all, but cousins of our Lord.

S. Hieron.
adv.
Helvidium.

Two objections may be raised to such a theory, Even if Alphæus and Cleophas were one and the

same,¹ it is far from certain that Mary his wife was sister to Mary the Blessed Virgin. We lay no stress upon the difficulty suggested by two daughters bearing the same name; for though the Church has commemorated the Mother of Jesus as Mary, the real name which she received from her parents was Mariam, the Hebrew Miriam. The Greek of the Evangelists uniformly recognises the distinction, and separates the spelling of her name from that of all the "Maries."

We maintain, however, that the doubtful interpretation of a single verse is too slender a thread to support a theory involving so much. S. John, in his description of the Crucifixion, says, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." It has been commonly assumed that he speaks here only of three persons; and Christian Art has stereotyped this interpretation by the familiar representation of "the three Maries," with none other near save the beloved disciple. We think it far more probable that the Evangelist had before his eyes four women—viz., the Blessed Virgin, her sister, who is unnamed, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

If we accept another tradition, which makes the

Wieseler,
Stud. in
Krit. 1840,
p. 648.

Virgin's sister Salome S. John's mother, we can easily understand that a natural reserve on his part would account for the suppression of her name.

Euseb.
Eccl. Hist.
iv. 22.

Two things contribute to the conclusion that four persons are designated in the text. Firstly, the common practice of the Evangelists of arranging people in pairs. Secondly, and far more definitely, some direct testimony from the Syriac and other² Versions of the Gospels. In this the conjunction "and" is inserted between the Virgin's sister and Mary the wife of Cleophas, manifestly separating them as distinct persons. The fact that one of these translations was made as early as the second century³ adds no little weight to its authority upon disputed points. In the light of this interpretation, and in the absence of any other testimony, the relationship of the wife of Alphæus to the mother of our Lord falls to the ground.

Again, to make our Lord's brethren members of the Apostolic company, is to put them in a position from which the plain teaching of Scripture history seems to exclude them.

S. John
vii. 5.

In the case before us they are found protesting against the course which He thought it right to take. S. John expressly states that they did not believe in Him, and S. Luke treated them as a body

of men separate from the Apostles when he wrote, "These all," meaning the Eleven after the Ascension, "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Acts i. 14.

The declaration of S. John was made during the last year of our Lord's ministry, which increases the great improbability of such a state of feeling having been held compatible with the Apostolic office. Their unbelief, it is true, passed away, but not till after the Resurrection, and was perhaps mainly due to a direct manifestation of Himself to S. James, the 1 Cor. xv. 7. chief of their number.

The whole theory therefore completely breaks down when subjected to a careful examination, and we must look elsewhere for the true relationship.

Two explanations, both of which preserve the natural meaning of the expression "brethren," remain for consideration. The one, which however runs counter to the unbroken tradition of the perpetual virginity ⁴ of the Mother of Jesus, holds them to have been uterine brethren borne to Joseph after our Blessed Lord.

The title of "first-born son" given to Jesus seems at first sight to suggest the idea of others born subsequently; but it would convey no such suggestion

S. Luke
ii. 23.

to the Jewish mind. It was the recognised designation of the first child, whether others followed or not; it was a title of honour bespeaking special prerogatives and consecration to God.

S. John
xix. 26, 27.

It would have been surely a most unnatural thing for our Lord to commit His Mother on the cross to the care and protection of S. John, if she had had sons and daughters of her own at the time. It would have been next to impossible to have ignored the closest of family ties. It is no sufficient answer to say that He was justified in doing so, from the knowledge that His brethren did not believe in Him. He Who saw the end from the beginning knew well what a change the Resurrection would bring about, and that in a very short time one at least of the four would be foremost in every Christian work.⁵ It is far more likely, therefore, that they were what we should call "half-brethren," children of S. Joseph by a former wife. This is in accord with the traditional belief⁶ that he was much older than the Blessed Virgin, and accounts also for the air of seniority which they assume over Jesus, endeavouring to restrain Him in the circumstances we are now considering, and giving Him their counsel somewhat dictatorially on another occasion.

Origen in
Matt.
xiii. 55.
Protevang.
S. James 9.
Historia
Joseph. 2.
S. John
viii. 4.

Furthermore, the theory has all the prestige which

attaches to the earliest belief, and it was unquestionably most prevalent in Palestine,⁷ the land where the truth concerning His kinship was presumably most likely to be preserved.

Now the question with which Jesus met the information of the multitude, "Who is My mother or My brethren?" suggests a disregard for natural ties of human relationship. But this is fully contradicted by other passages in His life. We have only to recall the scene at the grave of Lazarus, where He exhibited such marks of affection that the bystanders exclaimed, "Behold how He loved him!" or still more strikingly that upon the cross, where, amidst all the agony that He was enduring, His whole soul went out in love for her who had borne Him. He would not leave her widowed and childless to the cold world, but committed her in all the tender solicitude of a most loving heart to one whom He Himself had trained, during three years of unchecked affection, in all the mysteries of the fullest human love, to fill His vacant place and be to His Mother a second son. S. John
xi. 36.

All this is amply sufficient to prove that His human heart was not indifferent to family ties or the claims of friendship.

But there is another side to the picture, which

represents in equally vivid colours the principle that the calls of natural affections, strong though they be, are not the strongest, and that they are necessarily postponed when brought into conflict with the higher duties of the spiritual life.

S. Luke
ii. 48, 49.

It appears first in His answer to the sorrowful reproach of His Mother, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?" There is no regretful apology, nothing but the question of surprise, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

S. John ii. 4.

It reappears in His remonstrance at the marriage feast, when she seemed to forget His mission, and almost commanded Him what to do: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

S. Luke
ix. 60.

Again, what could be seemingly harsher than His reply to the Scribe who asked permission to show the last token of respect to his father: "Let the dead bury their dead"? But Jesus recognised the critical position, and the peril of the least hesitancy for a half-hearted follower, and, even at the risk of appearing unnatural, ignored the claims of filial affection.

And we hear another echo in the narrative now before us. His brethren, who ill understood His work, having persuaded His Mother, perhaps against her will, to join in their action, attempted to divert

Him from His purpose. But no human tie could hinder Him here. There is, nevertheless, a touch of tenderness in the way in which He meets them, showing how the higher claim for obedience to God must override the lower, and trying to make them one with Himself, members of the family and household of God: "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother."

NOTES.

¹ It is very difficult to realise that the two names are but different forms of one and the same.

² Viz., the Persian and Æthiopic.

³ This is according to the Peshito. The Jerusalem Syriac, though not interpolating "and," places a full stop after His mother's sister, "suggesting by punctuation the same interpretation."

⁴ S. Matthew, by the expression "knew her not till she brought forth a son," seems to contradict this; but, as Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out, all that the Evangelist intended was "to show that Jesus was not begotten in the course of nature; and thus, while it denies any previous intercourse with her husband, it neither asserts nor implies any subsequent intercourse."—App. ii. to Galat. p. 257. Epiphanius writes: "As the lioness is said to exhaust her fertility in the production of a single offspring (Herodot. iii. 108), so she who bore the Lion of Judah could not in the nature of things become a mother a second time."—Qu. by Lightfoot, p. 270. Archdeacon Farrar is almost alone among modern scholars in upholding the Helvidian view, *i.e.* that they

were the Virgin's children ; but the exhaustive treatise of Bishop Lightfoot has decided the case in favour of the Epiphanian view, *i.e.* that they were sons of S. Joseph by a former wife.

⁵ S. James, the Lord's brother, became Bishop of Jerusalem.

⁶ Christian Art has perpetuated the belief by always representing S. Joseph as an old man. Epiphanius says that he was eighty years old when he espoused the Blessed Virgin.

⁷ Epiphanius, the great supporter of this view in the controversy with S. Jerome and Helvidius, was a native of Palestine. It is said that S. Jerome abandoned the theory of cousinhood, and adopted this after his residence at Bethlehem, where he would hear the true tradition.

XVII.

The Parable of the Sower.

S. MARK IV. 1-12.

1. And He began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2. And He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in His doctrine, 3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4. and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6. but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9. And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10. And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. 11. And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: 12. that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

THERE are two circumstances which lend a peculiar interest to this parable. It was the first spoken by our Lord, and the scene may be identified almost beyond a question.

There is always some special charm and attraction in the earliest productions of great and dis-

tinguished people. The first sermon of a preacher like S. Chrysostom, or the first drawing of an artist like Raphael, would be eagerly examined, if they could anywhere be found. They would exhibit, no doubt, some sign and earnest of coming greatness, but in power and skill they would fall immeasurably below the standard of excellence reached in later years. How different in this respect is the first parable of Him "Who spake as never man spake"! It bears no trace of inferiority, but comes forth perfect as the latest that fell from His lips.

Again, it affords us no little pleasure to be able to determine the exact locality where it was delivered. He was teaching on the shores of the lake, not far from Capernaum, and the crowd gathered so thickly about Him that, in order to obtain a position of advantage for preaching, He entered a boat, rowed out a few strokes from the land, and then turned round to address them. Now, travellers in Palestine have often found the imagery of the Parables repeated in what they have themselves seen passing before their eyes. The vineyard with its fence and wine-press and tower—the shepherd with the sheep following, not going before—the man who fell among thieves,—all are illustrated almost to the letter in the present day.

But when the parable of the Sower was spoken, our Lord was by the sea-side, and there we should have expected that His similes would have been drawn from storms and ships and nets, hardly from fields and agriculture. We know what life and freshness He was wont to impart to His teaching by basing it upon the sights and objects immediately present. It is exemplified here, where it was least expected, in a very striking manner. A well-known Eastern traveller has described his feelings on visiting the neighbourhood. As he was wondering what there could possibly be to suggest such imagery, his attention was arrested by a slight recess in the hillside, which disclosed at once "every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it or upon it: itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and mule and human feet. There was the 'good' rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that neighbourhood from the bare hills elsewhere, descending towards the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the

hillside protruding here and there through the corn-fields, as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn—the ‘Nebk,’ that kind of which tradition says the Crown of Thorns¹ was woven,—springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat.” It is indeed a strange coincidence that in a land where such vast changes have taken place during eighteen centuries—more perhaps than in any other country in the world—the scene of our Lord’s first parable, from the reproduction of the exact features, should be capable of almost certain identification.

Two expressions arrest our notice at once, as they were manifestly designed to arrest that of the assembled multitude: “Hearken; Behold!” The parable begins with “Hearken;” it closes with “Take heed what ye hear.” He was about to adopt a mode of teaching unfamiliar to their ears: it needed an undivided attention. “Behold!” Did He actually point to a husbandman, as he came forth at the moment from his homestead on the hillside and began to sow? If we could be sure that the sequence of events has brought us to the autumnal seed-time, we could hardly doubt it, but the chronological order here is most difficult to determine.

And then as they listened with a newly-awakened

interest, He clothed the sad experience of the farmer in a parabolic form, and told them how much of the seed that was sown brought no return—three parts lost, one only saved. We can scarcely conceive how its moral could have escaped even the meanest understanding; but the disciples were astonished that He should speak to the crowds in any but the transparent language to which they were used. They were not even sure that they rightly understood Him themselves. “Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?” they asked. The method of teaching was common among the Jews. Parables abound in the Talmud. Hillel and Shammai and Rabbi Meir² have left many examples, but as the Rabbis held the poor and ignorant in contempt, and cared only to find the rich and intelligent³ classes sitting at their feet, it is probable that the surprise of the disciples was occasioned by His adopting, with the multitude at large, a style hitherto appropriated to narrower circles. There is an illustration of this distinction in one of the Apocryphal Books, where, in contrasting the learned with artisans and labourers, the writer says of the latter, “they shall not be found where parables are spoken.”⁴

S. Matt.
xiii. 10.

Synhedrim,
38 b, 39 a.
Midrash on
Canticles,
i. 1.

Ecclesiasticus
xxxviii. 33.

Our Lord gave a reason to His disciples when they were alone. Because their minds were receptive

of truth, and, as compared with that of the general public, capable of appreciating the deep mysteries of the Gospel,⁵ He sets them aside. But He had now been teaching for a considerable time, and with such plainness of speech that there was no excuse if men in general could not understand the nature of His message. It was, so to speak, a crisis in their lives; He had reached a point where He must test results. He could not always go on casting pearls before swine, so henceforward a new line must be adopted. It was of the nature of a parable both to conceal and to unveil. To men whose minds were enlightened it was a revelation of spiritual truths, but hearts that were waxed gross, and ears dull of hearing, it only hardened into greater insensibility. Thinking only of the latter, He takes up the language of

Isaiah, who had been sent to the Jews with a penal message from the Almighty, when the decree had gone forth that their sin must work out its punishment, because the day of grace was past. But that He adopted the interpretation of the Septuagint⁶ version in preference to the harsher form assumed in the Hebrew, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and

Isa. vi. 9. 10.

S. Matt.
xiii. 13.

be healed :” is the most convincing proof that He did not intend, what the words taken by themselves would appear to convey, and that His purpose was only penal and retributive.

He had learned by experience the hopelessness of His task, and foreseeing the failure of this fresh attempt, “half in sadness, half in irony” perhaps, He spoke as though He aimed⁷ at producing the expected result. It was too true that those who saw His miracles without perceiving their symbolism, and heard His words only to miss their spiritual import, were by those very sights and sounds left in a worse condition than before ; but the fact that His whole mission was a prolonged appeal to men to receive His words that they might have life, is the clearest evidence that He could never at any time have designed that His preaching should aggravate their impenitence and hardness of heart.

NOTES.

¹ In all probability the name of “*Spina Christi*” was given to this from the idea that, having very sharp points, it was most likely to have been chosen for the crown. The object, however, of crowning Him appears to have been mockery rather than cruelty, so that they would choose one with leaves more nearly resembling those of the imperial wreaths, and a stem more pliable than that of the Nebk.

² Hillel and Shammai were the chief teachers before our Lord, R. Meir immediately after. It was said of the last that a third of his teaching was by parables.

³ Cf. i. 92.

⁴ I am indebted for this reference to a note in Professor Plumptre's Commentary on S. Matthew.

⁵ Only by comparison. They had much to learn as yet; and the gradual and patient guidance of them into the truths of revelation is a subject well worthy of notice.

⁶ In the Hebrew it is in the imperative mood—a command to the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat," etc. In the LXX. the people are supposed to do it themselves. Sadler in his notes on the passage in S. Matthew has shown how a full consideration of the passage in Isaiah mitigates the apparent harshness of God's command. The whole note is worthy of consideration. The LXX. has lost the significance of a common and very forcible Hebrew idiom in the rendering, "that seeing they may see and not perceive." It is rather, "that they may *fully* see," see without anything to hide, but not perceive what it meant—that the sense of sight may be quickened but the understanding made dull.

The *ὅρα* of S. Mark should be read in connection with the *ὄρα* of S. Matthew, and in the light of our Lord's acceptance of the more merciful rendering of the LXX.

XVIII.

The Parable of the Sower explained.

S. MARK IV. 13-25.

13. And He said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14. The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17. and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19. and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh

unfruitful. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

21. And He said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? *and* not to be set on a candlestick? 22. For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23. If any *man* have ears to hear, let him hear. 24. And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even *that* which he hath.

THE disciples must have grasped, at least in part, the hidden meaning of the parable. Otherwise our Lord could hardly have spoken of them, as knowing the mysteries of the kingdom; for no spiritual teaching could be made simpler than that.

They needed however to have their hazy and fragmentary ideas cleared of all doubtfulness and expressed with coherence; and this He did for them, filling up what was lacking, correcting mistaken conceptions, and leaving a model of exposition for all time.

Now when He framed the parable, He classified the hearers of the Word according to His Own experience as a Preacher; basing His classification not so much upon generalities as upon well-remembered illustrations. It would not be difficult to exemplify this by specimens¹ drawn from the records of His dealings with men; but it will suffice now to give point to His descriptions, by recalling the divers effects produced by His claims to the Messiahship.

There were men hardened by Jewish prejudice, and seared with worldliness, who looked only for material advancement by the establishment of a new kingdom, and yet flocked to hear His words, meek and lowly as He was. They might possibly have been impressed, had not the Pharisaic enemies of the Cross, the emissaries of Satan, stepped in with their specious arguments, and caught away the seed before ever it found any lodgment in their hearts.

Then there were others of an emotional temperament,² who were carried away in the excitement

aroused by His sudden popularity, who, when they witnessed the wonderful works that He did, would have taken Him by force, and made Him a king, and yet, staggered by the first check their enthusiasm received, within twenty-four hours "went away backward, and walked no more with Him."

Again, there was a third class, more limited, no doubt, who saw in Him the Beauty they desired, and recognised His "goodness," men too whom He loved in return for all that was best in their lives, but who failed at last because their heart was not whole. Underneath all this there was "a root of bitterness,"—love of riches, or pleasure, or even distracting cares of home,—and though for a time they showed no vitality, not springing up simultaneously with the crop of new desires, yet by the rapidity and rankness of their growth, they just spoiled the life when it was on the eve of bearing fruit.³

The last class was composed of those whose hearts the Baptist had prepared, and the Lord had opened, who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel," men like SS. Andrew and John and Nathanael, or women like the devout band who "ministered to Him of their substance," and in varying degrees of productiveness bore fruit in their lives.

This is but a single application of the parable,

S. John
vi. 14, 15, 66.

S. Mark
x. 17, 21.

S. Luke
ii. 25.
S. John i. 35.

adapted to a special time, but the language is so pregnant and comprehensive that those who have rejected or received His Word from whatever motive, throughout all history can see their image reflected in some portion of its fourfold division.

The exposition was followed up by three proverbial⁴ sayings, suggested no doubt by its teaching, and all calculated to enforce the importance of communicating to others what we have received ourselves.

The object of material light is that it may be diffused. Conceal it by a covering, and the very object of its existence is frustrated. Even so the spiritual illumination enjoyed by the disciples would fail in its purpose, if it were either extinguished or concealed.

It can hardly be illustrated better than by the familiar story of the Calais lighthouse-keeper, who, when boasting of the brilliancy of his lamp, was asked what would happen if it were suffered to go out, or if the reflectors became dim. "Impossible," he answered, "for yonder, where nothing can be seen by us, there are ships sailing to every harbour of the sea; if to-night I failed in my duty some one might be shipwrecked. No! I like to think that the eyes of the whole world are fixed upon my light."

This man understood well what our Lord had taught S. Matt. v. 14. Thomson, The Land and the Book, 373. Ritter, Compar. Geogr. ii. 164.

the disciples when He said that they were to be like Safed,⁵ the city set upon an hill which could not be hid, and to remember that, inasmuch as they were the light of the world, they must shine before men.

After this He justifies the parabolic form of teaching, which often served to veil the truth, on the ground that immediate revelation is not always desirable. Many things are concealed, both in nature and by art, though the concealment is by no means designed to be permanent. What striking illustrations of the principle are furnished in Geology! Look at the almost measureless beds of coal, hidden for ages in the bowels of the earth, but designed by Providence to be revealed when necessity should arise. The precise time for the unveiling it is not always easy to decide, because man's knowledge is finite, but we rest assured that it will coincide with the need for its use. It is a principle worth bearing in mind when human efforts fail; for it is encouraging to know that such a result may be due simply to the fact that we have tried unconsciously to anticipate the fore-appointed time.

He reverts, in conclusion, to the principle of the first proverb, by quoting another of an analogous kind. Man learns by teaching, and the more use

he makes of what he acquires, the more he will be enriched. But let him refuse to acknowledge the obligation to measure out what he has himself received—to trade, that is, with the Talents or Pounds intrusted to him for profit,—and they will be taken from him and given to others. All history, whether of individuals or communities, is an unbroken witness to the fact, that no good gift, either of wealth, or influence, or spiritual wisdom, is bestowed for the sole use of the immediate recipient.

“We lose what on ourselves we spend,
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend:”

and we lend to God what we give to our fellow-creatures.

NOTES.

¹ Bruce, in his *Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, adopting a different mode of illustration, has found examples of each kind of hearer in S. Luke xii. 11, 13, ix. 57, and 61, 62, and in the case of Barnabas.

² The comparison is only rightly appreciated by noticing that it is not “stony ground,” so much as rocks covered with a thin layer of soil. The heat of the sun acting upon the rock excites hasty growth, and is followed by premature withering.

³ The meaning is better expressed in S. Luke, οὐ τελεσφοροῦσιν, “they bring no fruit to perfection.”

⁴ The principle involved was of such vital importance that the proverbial sayings were repeated on more than one occasion, cf. S. Matt. v. 14, 15, 16, x. 26 ; S. Luke xii. 2.

⁵ Maundrell, Jowett, and others have so identified Safed. It rises to the height of nearly 3000 feet, and would certainly be conspicuous from Kurun Hattin, the traditional scene of the Sermon on the Mount.

XIX.

The Gradual Growth of the Seed.

S. MARK IV. 26-29.

26. And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, 27. and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

IN this parable, of almost unique beauty, which S. Mark alone has recorded, our Lord teaches that there is an analogy to be drawn between the operations of Nature and Grace. He speaks of the latter under the figure of a kingdom. Now "the kingdom of God" is an expression used in Holy Scripture in a threefold sense.

It is that empire which shall be established at the end of the world, when "all things shall be subdued unto Him, . . . that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Again, it is the Divinely-constituted society of the Church, in which His sovereign powers of admission and exclusion, of government and guid-

ance, were delegated to a human Ministry, when its Founder said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations;" and again, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you: . . . whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

S. Matt.
xxviii. 18, 19.
S. John
xx. 21, 22.

Yet once more, it is the reign of grace in the individual heart, whose presence is so productive of good, that, like the "treasure hid in the field," or the "one pearl of great price," no sacrifice can be too much to pay for its acquisition.

S. Matt.
xiii. 44, 46.

Our Lord makes no reference here to the first of the above meanings, but in regard to the other two, shows how the spiritual and natural kingdoms are governed and controlled by similar laws.

Now, in every comparison of the higher with the lower—the heavenly and spiritual with the earthly and natural—while there are many points of close similitude, there will of necessity be some also of manifest divergence. The present parable furnishes an apt illustration when it says that the sower of the seed knows nothing of the mysterious laws of growth and development, and implies that the farmer, having sown his barley or wheat, goes about his ordinary avocations with little

thought of that, over which he knows that he has no control. But of Him Who plants the seed of Divine grace in the individual heart, or forms the embryo of what is destined to become a visible body of Christians, none can say that He is careless of its condition or is baffled in understanding the progressive stages of its formation.

Upon the main point, however, which the parable was intended to enforce, there is an exact parallel. The normal growth is not fitful or capricious, but in accordance with well-ordered laws of slow and gradual progression.

Now look at the kingdom of God in its twofold aspect in the light of this statement. Take first the history of the Church in its collective community. The world was prepared for it by the Incarnation and Redemption. When Christ gave His life for mankind, and broke down the middle wall of partition which sin had built up between man and God, humanly speaking, there would be a rapid diffusion of spiritual knowledge, and no appreciable interval "between the two events of Christ's dying for the world and the world falling prostrate" at His feet. But He taught men by this parable not to cherish any such expectation; the seed must first lie dormant for a time, then the springing blade would

follow in the uprising of small communities struggling through the soil of oppression and persecution; then, when the Empire should be converted, the blade would sprout into the ear, and the Churches grow and Sees be multiplied; and now we still wait, after eighteen centuries of alternation of hope and despair, of success and adversity, of the waxing and waning of missionary enterprise,—we still wait for the full corn and the time of harvest, when “the valleys shall stand so thick with corn Ps. lxxv. 14. that they shall laugh and sing;” and when “the P. B. V. earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as Isa. xi. 9. the waters cover the sea.” Hab. ii. 14.

Look again at individual souls. The seed of the spiritual life is sown in Holy Baptism, when “by the washing of water and renewing of the Holy Titus iii. 5. Ghost” the baptized person is translated from the kingdom of wrath into the kingdom of grace, and receives from God the requisite powers for continuance therein. The effects of the gift, however, may be invisible for a time, necessarily so if the rite has been received in an unconscious state; it may lie dormant for years, but if the influences are favourable, if the education is carefully tended, if childhood and youth are duly sheltered from the blighting winds of early temptations, and the chilling frosts of

unbelief, then it may be expected to grow up from one stage of holiness to another. It may not be always (as neither is it in the field of nature) with uniform progress, but on the whole it develops by the selfsame laws of growth which normally govern the growing corn, from the first burst of germinating life to the ripened grain of full sanctification.

The language of the parable, where it speaks of the spontaneous growth of the corn in the soil, needs careful interpretation in its relation to the Divine life. It is true that it is the Spirit of God Which is the great vivifying Agent in the soul of man, just as in nature, it is from its deposition in the earth that germination is produced; but it is not meant that nothing can hinder or foster the growth. In both cases the soil may be prepared, the weeds and noxious herbs uprooted, the sunlight more freely admitted by the removal of overshadowing trees, and the field may be fenced round for protection from the incursion of destructive influences; but the farmer and the preacher must unite in the confession that when they have done all, in their respective spheres, that lies within their reach, when Paul has planted, and Apollos watered, it is none but God Who can give the increase.

1 Cor. iii. 6

Now the general teaching of the parable¹ suggests

a consideration of two important doctrinal questions, viz. the relationship of Sanctification² to Conversion, and the mode of reconciling the absence of any sign of spiritual life, with the truth of Regeneration.

Jacob may have been changed in a single night ; he may have realised, under the influence of one preternatural vision, such an overpowering sense of God's Providence that the current of his life was immediately turned. Or again, in a somewhat similar manner, Saul the persecutor experienced "a wonderful conversion" through that sudden arrest on the road to Damascus ; and other saints, in all ages of Christian history—here one and there another—have shared the same experience, differing only in the degree of its force and influence. How then is the doctrine of Christ's language here affected by such cases ? There is no rule without its exceptions. These sudden conversions are as it were miracles of mercy. They resemble the instantaneous multiplication of the loaves in the desert : they are as when the divers stages of production are concentrated by Divine interposition into a single act, for a special object or a rare emergency. But to hint even, that the heart of man must be thus changed, and that the "where" and the "when" of the change should be definable

and certain, is a direct contradiction to the analogy which Christ drew. It is God's law—albeit a law admitting of infinite variation at the hands of Him Who made it—that the soul of man should be sanctified ordinarily, not by sudden crises or abnormal seasons, but by such a slow and gradual development as is witnessed every day in the fields around us.

Again, if no sign of the Holy Spirit's influence manifests itself during the lapse of years in the life of the baptized, what conclusion must be drawn? Dare any one assert that the gift of Regeneration was either not imparted in Holy Baptism, or has since been taken away? Is it not truer that it is only dormant, not quenched or crushed, but waiting to be quickened in God's good time, just as we read of grains of wheat laid up with mummies, which, after ages of unproductive existence, have actually germinated and grown to maturity when the circumstances of the situation changed?

What God requires is the patience of the farmer, who "sleeps, and rises night and day" in the full assurance that "though it tarry it will surely come." If ever then we are discouraged by any apparent failure, either in our own heart or in the hearts of others, let us take courage from what we may see for ourselves in the analogies of Nature, always

remembering what closer observation teaches, that "the higher the thing which grows in the scale of being, the slower its growth."

NOTES.

¹ In this very pregnant parable we have been obliged to pass over much that is well worthy of consideration. The reader may consult with advantage Bruce, *Parabolic Teaching*, ch. v.

² It is very necessary to distinguish carefully theological terms. Regeneration, *παλιγγενεσία* (Tit. iii. 5), is an initial act, in which we are "begotten again," *ἀναγεγεννημένοι* (1 S. Pet. i. 3), a new relationship of spiritual Paternity being established between us and God. It is a completed act. We can never be "regenerated" again. Holy Scripture never calls upon those who have fallen away from Baptismal grace to "be born again."

Sanctification, *ἁγιασμός*, is a progressive work by which fallen man is made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." It begins coincidently with Regeneration. The distinction is well marked in the Collect for Christmas Day, "Grant that we being regenerate . . . may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit."

Conversion, *ἐπιστροφή*, is a change from a false religion to the true, or a return, after falling away from grace given, on the part of a convinced penitent. This may therefore take place before or after Baptism.

XX.

The Parable of the Mustard-Seed.

S. MARK IV. 30-34.

30. And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? 31. *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: 32. but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and

shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. 33. And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*. 34. But without a parable spake He not unto them: and *when they were* alone, He expounded all *things* to His disciples.

THE interpretation of Holy Scripture has often suffered from an undue anxiety to press details, especially in connection with its parabolic teaching. Difficulties of this kind have been created by certain circumstances of the parable before us. The mustard plant, it is urged, does not fully meet the requirements of the language. There are other seeds that are smaller: it does not shoot out large branches, nor become "a great tree:" at best it is little more than a garden shrub.

S. Luke
xiii. 19.

The difficulties were thought to have been solved when a learned botanist¹ discovered a tree in

Palestine which, in everything but name, seemed to fulfil the demands of the parable. Its name is *Salvadora Persica*; it grows to a considerable height, puts forth leafy branches, and possesses many properties of the mustard plant.

Journal of
the Royal
Asiatic Soc.
No. xv.
1844.

Now, while we hail with satisfaction any scientific discovery for the elucidation of obscure passages of the Bible, care must be taken not to depart from the plain teaching because a novel interpretation pleases the fancy, and to see that in clearing away existing obstacles, new ones are not created.

For instance, the *Salvadora* has since been found to grow only in southern climes, abounding in Abyssinia, the desert of Sinai, and other hot regions; and it is a great question whether it could have grown in Palestine, anywhere else than on the almost tropical shores of the Dead Sea. Whereas it is obvious that the force of the similitude would have been lost upon our Lord's hearers, unless He had spoken of something that was familiar to them.

Now, though it may be perfectly true that mustard as a wild plant attains no greater magnitude than a common shrub, yet when sown in "a garden," and properly cultivated, it becomes considerably larger. One of the old Rabbis narrates how he was wont to climb into a mustard-tree in his field

S. Luke
xiii. 19.

Lightfoot,
Exercit. in
Matt. xiii. 32.

Thomson,
The Land
and the
Book, 414.

as men climb into a fig-tree; and a trustworthy traveller of this generation testifies that in the rich plain of Akkar he had seen it "as tall as the horse and his rider." This is sufficient to show that, at all events, the mustard plant develops, till there is the utmost disproportion between the bulk to which it attains and the germ from which it sprung.

Acts ii. 5.
Col. i. 6.

No doubt other figures might have been chosen in abundance more suggestive of the great after-development of the kingdom of Christ, such forest-trees, for instance, as the oak of Bashan or cedar of Lebanon, but the acorn and cone were both far less adapted to represent the littleness of its initial state. The mustard was probably the smallest seed from which so large a shrub or tree was known to grow. If, then, such Oriental colouring is allowed for, as is reasonably admitted in other parts of Holy Scripture, no occasion remains for departing from the ordinary interpretation.

Talm. Bab.
Berachoth
31 a.
Mishnah,
Niddah v. 2.

Now it is clear that our Lord had no doubt that His comparison would be understood. "As small as a grain of mustard-seed" was a recognised proverb² for "the superlatively little;" and as such it is used by Him on two other occasions for the encouragement of the Apostles. If they had "faith

as a grain of mustard-seed" He promised them that they should remove mountains, or bid the sycamore-tree be uprooted and planted in the sea, and they should be instantly obeyed.

S. Matt.
xvii. 20.
S. Luke
xvii. 6.

It is not without a purpose that the contrast between the first beginning of His kingdom and its expected future should have been put before the Apostles in such a striking form. The parables which had preceded it must have had a most depressing effect upon their minds. They showed that of the seed sown in the hearts of men, three parts would be lost to one saved; and that the field carefully planted with the best of seeds too often mocked all the husbandman's hopes of a goodly crop by a simultaneous growth of noxious weeds. Well then might the parable of the mustard-seed be spoken to encourage them in their despondency!

S. Matt.
xiii. 24.

Its fulfilment is so patent that it requires but the briefest notice. It may be well, however, to draw an illustration from a single stage in its development. Contrast the condition of the Church on what is called her birthday, with the same after the first three centuries of her existence. Place yourself in imagination in the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem before the Apostles entered upon their labours. There are but eleven—men of the humblest

A.D. 325.

rank of life, with few of the qualifications which the judgment of the world requires for such an enterprise. Then overleap the centuries of chequered history that followed, and take your place in the Council Chamber at Nicæa.³ It is but a portion of the family by which the whole earth was overspread, but it presents a marvellous contrast to its first gathering. The eleven have grown into upwards of three hundred;⁴ and the miserable handful of followers upon whom the Apostles could count at the first, has increased till the fruit thereof "shakes like Libanus," and is "green in the city like grass upon the earth."

It will suffice for the contrast, but it must not be forgotten that although representatives were present from almost every part of the Eastern Empire, there were but few⁵ from the Western, owing mainly perhaps to the exigencies of travel. There were Bishops⁶ from the great centres of population, as Alexandria, or Carthage, or Jerusalem; Bishops, too, from the remote deserts far up the Nile as the Coptic hermits; delegates from the Churches of the extreme North and the farthest East, and from the isles of the sea. It fills one with amazement to find every country almost of the East, familiar and unfamiliar, represented in the Assembly. The

growth of the Apostolic Church has indeed, despite all the opposition that the world could array against her, fulfilled to the very letter the conditions of the comparison, "The little one has become a thousand,"—the smallest of seeds has developed into a goodly tree.

Now, though it is quite true that the object of the parable was simply to predict the future increase of the Kingdom, other analogies, to be found by further comparison, however foreign to the main purpose, are not to be ignored. There is surely a side-lesson to be learned from the natural properties of the mustard-seed, from its internal heat and pungency, and from "the fact that it must be bruised ere it yield its best virtues." Its inherent stimulating force finds its parallel in the quickening vitality and vigour that comes from the indwelling of the lifegiving power of the Holy Spirit; and the necessity of crushing it, is no inapt figure of the principle which has been embodied in the familiar proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Yet once more, if in addition to its strength and its powers of expansion, it was possessed, as is believed, also of medicinal properties, it is impossible to ignore its resemblance to the tree of life Rev. xxii. 2.

in the heavenly city—so true an emblem of the Church,—“which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month,” and whose “leaves were for the healing of the nations.”

NOTES.

¹ Dr. Royle adopted a suggestion previously made by two travellers, Irby and Mangles (Travels in Egypt, ch. vii.). It is called in Arabic *khardal*, which is the common name for mustard. Dr. R. made a mistake in assuming that it grew by the Sea of Galilee. Cf. Bible Educator, i. 119; Smith's Dict. ii. 446; Tristram, Nat. Hist. of the Bible, 472.

² Archbishop Trench quotes a passage from the Qur'an (Sur. 31):—"Oh my son, verily every matter, whether bad or good, though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, God will bring the same to light."

³ Perhaps the contrast would have seemed greater if we had selected the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the greatest both in numbers and dignity, when 636 Bishops were present instead of 318, but we selected the earlier as the first great historical event of universal interest, marking the first important epoch.

⁴ The numbers have been variously stated—by Eusebius as 250, by Athanasius 300, by Socrates, Sozomen, and others, 318. The last is far most probable, especially owing to the mystical meanings that were attached to it in early times.

■ The Western Bishops numbered barely ten. Their Sees were, besides those mentioned below, French, Spanish, Sicilian, Calabrian, Milanese, and Pannonian.

⁶ The Bishop of Alexandria was then styled "the Pope." This was Alexander, but his See was better represented by his deacon, Athanasius. From the Coptic Church there were Potammon of Heracleopolis and Paphnutius of the Upper Thebaid. From the North, Theophilus the Goth; from the far East, John the Persian; from the islands, Spiridion of Cyprus. Cf. Stanley's Eastern Church, Lecture iii.

XXI.

The Stilling of the Storm.

S. MARK IV. 35-41.

35. And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him *even* as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. 37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish? 39. And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how *is it that* ye have no faith? 41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What *manner of* man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

Stanley
Sin. and
Palest. 379.

S. Matt.
xiii.

THE eastern side of the Sea of Galilee has been characterised as a "natural refuge from the active life of the western shores." It was for this reason that our Lord so often retired there for rest, and to commune with His Father in the solitude of the mountain range by which it is bounded. If the sequence of events be taken according to this Gospel, it was after a day spent in teaching the people through a succession of parables, that at eventide Jesus expressed to the disciples His desire to pass over to the other side. His wish was law,

and it would seem there were special reasons on this occasion for avoiding the least delay. The boat, which was always drawn up on the shore where He was, was immediately launched, and, without any preparation, they embarked. It almost indicates that He was physically exhausted¹ with His day's work, and they wished without loss of time to get on to the lake, that He might be refreshed by its breezes. At all events, "they took Him even as He was in the ship."

"And there arose a great storm of wind."

Travellers say that the Sea of Galilee is peculiarly liable to sudden squalls caused by the physical features of the district. It is not unlike some of the lakes of Switzerland, on which sailing is admittedly dangerous from a more or less similar cause. The sea lies in a deep depression, as much as 600 feet or more, below the level of the surrounding country. It is girt in almost entirely by a range of hills, rising in places to a considerable height, and crowned by vast plateaus of table-land. The hillsides are worn by watercourses into deep gorges, which act like funnels, through which the wind pours down from the higher latitudes on to the surface of the lake. The temperature on the edge of the water is almost tropical, while that above is

Thomson,
The Land
and the
Book, 374.

Ritter,
Compar.
Geogr. 252.

many degrees lower, and this variation aggravates not a little the violence of the storms.

The disciples on this occasion were overtaken by one of these, and in imminent danger of being wrecked. It was a storm of more than ordinary severity, for the disciples, who were fishermen, and had had their home on those very waters, and must have been often exposed to tempestuous weather, were in real fear. The waves were fast filling the boat, and it would certainly sink if matters did not immediately mend.

Their only hope lay in the miraculous intervention of their Lord, Who, with His head upon the boatswain's cushion, was sleeping, wholly undisturbed by the tumult around. They had as yet seen but one instance in which He had exercised His power over the material elements; but the miracle at Cana of Galilee had shown that even the waters were obedient unto His word, and though, as was probable, only a few² of the disciples had witnessed it, the fact must have become known to all; and if they thought of it at the time, despair would be relieved by hope, when they awoke Him to a sense of their danger. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" It is almost certain that they were the words of S. Peter. The rest may have

joined, but they are in such exact accord with that impatient and impulsive spirit, which so often betrayed him into unbecoming words and acts, that we can have little doubt that the remonstrance was his in the first instance.

The recollection of that hasty speech clung to him in after years ; and while the other Evangelists only record an expression of earnest entreaty, "Lord, save us ; we perish," or "Master, Master, we perish," S. Peter was careful to make known to S. Mark one which he felt reflected discredit upon himself.

But though there is in their cry an evidence of imperfect confidence, and even of hasty impatience, knowing how little way He had been able to advance them as yet in their spiritual training, Jesus showed nothing but tenderness towards them. "He rebuked the wind." Seeing the wild fury with which it was lashing the waves into commotion, as though it were some monster whose roar must be silenced, He cries to it to "be silent and be gagged," for such in the original is the force of the expression, "Peace, be still."³

Nature in her wildest uproar recognised the voice of Him Who was her rightful Lord, and obeyed His command. "And there was a great calm." It was no ordinary abatement, for commonly, when the

S. Matt.
viii. 25.
S. Luke
viii. 24.

wind ceases, and for long after, there is a great swell upon the waves: when they are no more agitated by external force, they require time to recover their ordinary condition; but here they were themselves at rest as though nothing had disturbed them. It puts out of question all possibility of explaining the miracle by natural causes.

Then,⁴ having relieved His disciples from their impending peril, His first thought was to turn it to account in helping and preparing them for the greater dangers and difficulties that lay in their future. Nothing could exceed the gentleness with which He reproved their impatient distrust. "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" It was a simple call upon them to remember what they had learned, what proofs He had given of His power and His willingness to help and deliver. And great fear came upon them—not the fear which had made them tremble for their safety, but an overmastering sense of awe. What they had just witnessed was not altogether a new revelation, but it had torn away another bandage from their eyes, and their apprehension of Him Who was thus "gradually making Himself felt in all His fulness," became proportionately stronger, and they asked one another, in amazed surprise at their con-

victions, "What manner of man is this," or, more literally, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" The "then" is by no means without its significance, for it points back to what they had witnessed, and points on to the conclusion that must be drawn from it. The truth which was unfolding before them is clear and patent to us, that it was He of Whom the Psalmist had written, "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;" or again, "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." Ps. cvii. 28.
Ps. lxxxix.
8, 9.

The symbolical application of this miracle has been made almost more frequently than that of any other, whether that Galilean boat be compared to the Ark of Christ's Church, or to the individual soul sustained in its voyage through "the waves of this troublesome world" by the indwelling Presence of the Captain of our salvation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Under a very familiar figure in early times,⁵ the Church is depicted as a ship supported in the sea by a great fish, whilst a dove is sitting upon the top of the mast. The fish was regarded

S. Aug.
de Civ. Dei,
xviii. 23.
Optat.
Milevi de
Schism.
Donat. iii. 2.

as emblematic of Christ, because the Greek word formed an acrostic, containing the initial letters of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." The dove perched upon the mast, represented the Holy Spirit, Who, as at the first creation, broods over the waters, and by His gentle influence brings order out of confusion.

S. Aug.
Serm. lxxiii.

One of the great Latin Fathers⁶ has applied the several parts of the miracle to the history of the individual soul somewhat as follows: "We are sailing through life as through a sea, and the wind rises and storms of tempest spring up. How is this, save because Jesus is sleeping in thee? If He were not asleep in thee, thou wouldest be calm and at rest. But why is He sleeping? Because thy faith is asleep. And what shalt thou do to be delivered? Arouse Him. 'Master, we perish.' Then He will awaken: thy faith will revive: and though the tempests roar and beat into thy ship, yet, strong in thy recovered faith, thou wilt defy the elements: the danger will pass away, and thou wilt reach in safety the haven where thou wouldest be."

NOTES.

¹ There is evidence of this in the fact that He fell asleep in the boat. The expression "just as He was" is akin to that in

S. John iv. 6, "sat thus on the well," οὕτως, "as He was," apparently expressed by the preceding words, "being wearied with His journey."

² This took place most probably before any of the disciples had been formally called to the Apostleship. The five who were mentioned in the first chapter of S. John would naturally be with them.

³ σιώπα, πεφίμωσο. The latter word is used properly for "muzzling" a beast—1 Cor. ix. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18. Our Lord applies it also to the unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum (S. Mark i. 25). Possibly there is an allusion to "the Prince of the power of the air" having aroused the storm.

⁴ SS. Mark and Luke both place the rebuking of the wind before His complaint of the disciples' want of faith; S. Matthew inverts the order. The difference may have arisen from the former resting upon a general report, the latter upon actual eye-witness of the scene.

⁵ For an account of the anagram, cf. the author's *After Death* 88.

⁶ I owe this quotation to Trench on Miracles, 157.

XXII.

The Demoniacs of Gadara.

S. MARK V. 1-10.

1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3. who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4. because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. 5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the

tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. 6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him, 7. and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, *Thou* Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not. 8. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit. 9. And He asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country.

THE night was closing in, when our Lord landed on the eastern shore of the lake. He had embarked with the disciples in the afternoon, when the sun began to decline at "the first¹ eventide," but the journey across, usually occupying two or three hours, had been much prolonged by the storm which they encountered: and it must have been late when they came to land. It adds considerably

S. Matt.
xiv. 15, 23.

to the weird character of the scene to realise this. The solitude of the coast, the bleak barren rocks, scarred and fissured with gloomy caverns, the wild shrieks of "the possessed," were sufficient of themselves to inspire one with a sense of awe, but it would be greatly intensified by the gathering darkness, and all the more as the light of the moon shone out upon the landscape.

Edersheim,
Life and
Times, i. 606

It lends a peculiar interest to the story that, after years of dispute, the locality has been incontestably identified by the discovery of the ruins of the town of Khersa,² exactly opposite to Capernaum, and close to the shore. Two of the most accurate writers on the Holy Land have described "the steep bluff and perpendicular declivity" which overhangs the lake at this spot, and satisfies most closely the requirements of the miracle.

Thomson,
The Land
and the
Book,
375-377.
Tristram,
Land of
Israel,
465.

As our Lord stepped out of the boat He was met immediately by a demoniac³ coming out of the tombs with which the mountain abounded, and of which so many traces still remain.

It would appear that it was a most aggravated case of "possession," and as such was doubtless selected by three Evangelists for especial notice.

S. Mark, as usual, is very vivid in his description, but something is added to it by the other two. From

a combination of all we gather the following results.

S. Matt.
S. Luke
viii. 28.
viii. 27, 29.

He wore no clothes ; he filled the air with his ravings ; he was driven by a suicidal mania to cut himself with stones ; he was the terror of the neighbourhood ; every effort to bind him had failed, for he was endowed with prodigious strength, and burst his chains ; he made his dwelling-place in the tombs, and he was possessed by a legion of evil spirits.⁴ It is impossible to conceive of a worthier claimant for the Divine compassion.

No sooner did he see Jesus in the distance than he recognised Him, the spirit that possessed him at once acknowledging the dreaded Presence of Him Who came to trample upon the powers of evil. And he did homage to Him, and addressed Him by a title of exceeding dignity, used only once elsewhere, in the prediction of His birth by the angel.

It is said that the title "Most High God" was the one commonly adopted in the formula of exorcism, and possibly the demoniac was prompted to use it, as that with which he was most familiar, from its frequent invocation over himself. With an earnest adjuration he begged that he might not be tormented. This he did, seeing that Jesus was about to cast him out, not, as the Authorised Version

renders it, "for He said to him"—but "for He was on the point of saying to him,"—"Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Had the word of authority once been uttered, it would have been too late to interpose, for when Jesus spake, it was done.

Then followed the question of his name, and that mysterious answer—"Legion,"⁵ for we are many." The man had seen, perhaps, the resistless might of the Imperial forces of Rome as they swept down all opposition, and it seemed to him the fittest symbol of the power which had taken him captive; or it may be from the double consciousness, which is so marked throughout, that it was the spirit within him that answered, and that he hoped by such an exaggerated estimate of his force, to overawe and terrify his Adversary.

"And he besought Him that He would not send them away out of the country." S. Luke has preserved a more definite expression, which is full of suggestiveness—"that He would not command them to go out into the deep." It was not the Galilean lake which lay before them, but "the abyss," "the bottomless pit," as S. John calls it, into which the devil and his angels will be consigned⁶ when their present liberty "to go to and fro on the earth" is taken away, and the final sentence passed upon them.

Rev. ix. 1, 11;
xx. 1.
S. Matt.
viii. 29.
Job i. 7.
S. Aug. de
Civ. Dei,
viii. xxiii. 3.

The sequel must remain for future consideration. We notice now some thoughts arising out of the narrative as far as it has proceeded.

The first touches the mode of treatment which the demoniac received at the hands of his fellow-creatures. Here is a man afflicted with the most terrible evil one can possibly imagine, abandoned to his cruel fate, with nothing done, no step taken in any direction, to mitigate his condition, but everything almost purposely contrived to aggravate its misery. He is driven from the haunts of men into a bleak barren region, to seek shelter from wind and rain and cold, in caverns where the dead lie buried; he is chained from time to time to the rocks, but only with the supernatural strength that belongs to frenzy and madness, to regain his freedom. Forsaken by every human being, he roams about by night and by day, not only to the terror of others, but cutting and maiming himself among the rocks and stones.

We have but to dwell upon such a picture of inhuman neglect as this, and then contrast it with the treatment such a deplorable case would have received in our own generation; and in realising this, we may well be thankful for the change which Christianity has effected alike in the estimate and the alleviation of suffering.

But not only do we note the neglect of the demoniac ; we go further, and say that it was a case which of all others deserved the greatest sympathy and consideration. He was not, as far as we are able to judge, one who had brought that terrible evil upon himself. A distinguished writer says, "We should find ourselves altogether upon a wrong track Trench, Miracles, 167. did we conceive of the demoniacs as the worst of men, and their possession as the plague and penalty of a wickedness in which they had greatly exceeded others. Rather we must esteem the demoniac as the unhappiest, but not of necessity one of the guiltiest of our race." There is indeed the widest gulf between the condition of the traitor Judas S. Luke xxii. 3. whom Satan entered when he committed an act of S. Matt. xvii. 18. unparalleled baseness, and that of the demoniac boy S. Luke ix. 42. at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount, who had not only been afflicted with epilepsy from childhood, but, according to Christ's own words, was possessed by "an unclean spirit."

But the question has often been asked, If demoniacal possession was something distinct from disease, mental or corporal, how are we to explain the fact that it is no longer existent? We do not stay to dispute the supposition that the phenomenon has disappeared, further than to observe that in the

East, especially in India, the advent of the Gospel is said to be not infrequently signalised by manifestations of Satanic agency not far removed in character from that under consideration.

Trench,
Miracles,
173.
Hecker,
Epidemics of
the Middle
Ages.
Delitzsch,
Biblical
Psychology,
Eng. tr. 358,
360.

It has, however, been proved that epidemics, both moral and physical, have appeared "at certain epochs, specially fitted for their generation, have gradually declined, and totally disappeared in others less congenial to them." Now the days of the Messiah were pre-eminently exceptional. To the powers of evil it was a most momentous crisis, and it was to be expected that they would be strained to the utmost to counteract opposing influences from which they had so much to fear.

Demoniacal possession was, so to speak, their death-struggle, the last convulsive spasm of an expiring force in the conflict with Him Who came into the world for the avowed purpose of planting His heel upon their prince's neck, and treading the powers of evil under His feet.

NOTES.

¹ The first evening was when the sun began to set, about three P.M. ; the second when it actually went down, about six P.M. The Paschal lamb was slain "between the evenings."

² This is probably the modern equivalent of the ancient Gergesa, which Origen says was the scene of the miracle. Gadara, the

modern Umkeis, is distant one mile and a half from the lake, and separated from it by a river, which sets it aside as impossible.

³ S. Luke agrees with S. Mark in mentioning one demoniac. S. Matthew speaks of two. It is possible that one was much better known than the other, and the fame of his cure would be spread abroad and stress laid upon it.—S. Aug. de Consens. Evang. ii. 24. S. Matthew, having been an eye-witness, remembered the fact that he was accompanied by a second. There is no contradiction, “*qui plura dicit pauciora complectitur; qui pauciora dicit, plura non negat.*”

■ The case of “possession” has been rendered especially difficult from the modern way of speaking of “the possessed of devils,” unfortunately perpetuated in the Revised Version. There is only one “devil.” He is spoken of many times in the New Testament, but never in the plural. The demons by whom men were “possessed” were evil spirits, his emissaries or “angels.”

Edersheim, in an Appendix on this subject, sums up thus: “Greater contrast could scarcely be conceived than between what we read in the New Testament and the views and practices mentioned in Rabbinic writings.” It is often said that our Lord adopted the Jewish way of speaking, and treated mental and physical diseases as though they were demoniacal possessions, and the modern usage of the term “lunatic” is quoted as a parallel. But there is the widest difference between them. Cf. Trench, *Miracles*, 153. “Possession,” it is true, was often accompanied by disease or infirmity, but often also distinguished from them.—S. Mark i. 33, xvii. 17, 18; S. Luke vi. 17, 18. The demons speak with more than human knowledge.—S. Mark i. 24; S. Matt. viii. 29. There is, moreover, a double consciousness in the possessed which is inexplicable save by an objective possession. Is it possible that our Lord could have so far yielded to popular prejudice as to embrace it in His commission to the Apostles (S. Matt. x. 8), and to make it a matter of thanksgiving to God when they reported their success? Cf. Edersheim, i. 480. Archdeacon Farrar’s theory

that "any mental aberration, sudden sickness, melancholy tendencies," and the like, were regarded as due to the direct influence of "demons" (*Life of Christ*, i. 236), can hardly be accepted, if the above writer has correctly interpreted the opinions of his nation. He concludes that there is no midway between rejecting the accounts of dispossession as purely mythical, or believing that there was a demonised state different from disease or madness.

⁵ Possibly it signified also that the evil spirits were banded together under officers in regular organisations, like the forces of an army.

⁶ Milton helped very largely to propagate the erroneous belief that the devil and the evil spirits are already in hell, in the place of torments. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, ii. 115-120; iii. 200-210.

XXIII.

The Herd of Swine destroyed.

S. MARK V. 11-20.

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine : and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. 14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind ; and they were afraid. 16. And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine. 17. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts. 18. And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. 19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy *friends*, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him : and all *men* did marvel.

It creates a feeling of surprise that there should be so large a herd of swine feeding in a country where to keep such animals was strictly prohibited by the Jewish Law. On the supposition that the owners were Jews, a motive has been sought for their destruction in its penal character. Nothing could be

Pliny,
Nat. Hist.
v. 18.

more natural than that our Lord should manifest His displeasure, if occasion offered, at such an overt act of disobedience. But it is doubtful whether the facts of the case justify the interpretation. History tells us how, after the conquest of Palestine, large numbers of Romans settled in that neighbourhood; and in addition to this, it was the region of Decapolis, of the ten cities which had remained in the heathen's¹ hands after the return of the Jews from captivity.

It will be well, therefore, to account for the destruction on other grounds; but we revert first to the circumstances which led to it. During their conversation with our Lord the devils besought Him that He would send them into the swine. It is difficult to decide whether such a desire may be taken as indicative of their natural propensity to all that was unclean, or as a proof of their craft and subtlety.

S. Matt.
xxiii. 27.

"Unclean" spirits would seize instinctively upon the bodies of those who, by excessive sensuality and indulgence of the flesh, had laid themselves open to their inroads.² They seem, moreover, to have found a congenial dwelling-place in the tombs of the dead, which to the ancients were types of all impurity. "Woe unto you, scribes and

Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." It may have been the same natural impulse that prompted them, when about to be driven out of the bodies of men, to seek for a lodgment in the lowest and most unclean of the brutes:—"Send us into the swine."

Or again, it may have been nothing but a deep designing plot to revenge themselves upon their destroyer. If only they could be the means of annihilating their herds, the owners would inevitably rise up against Him, at Whose bidding the destruction had been caused. They would not tolerate His Presence, but would drive Him out of their coasts. And so we know it came to pass.

But whatever their motive in making the request, it was instantly granted. No sooner was the permission given than a wild panic seized the herd, and they rushed "madly down the almost perpendicular declivity—those behind tumbling over and thrusting forward those before; and as there was neither time nor space to recover on the narrow shelf between the base and the lake, they were crowded headlong into the water and perished." ³

The swineherds fled in terror and dismay to the

Thomson,
The Land
and the
Book, 377.

town hard by, and told to their masters all that had happened; and the whole population was stirred by the tidings, and went out to meet Jesus.

The account closes with two requests, which stand in striking contrast to each other. The one was granted; the other denied. When the owners of the swine came to Jesus, they saw the poor demoniac, whom they had known and feared, no longer naked and wild and raving, but "clothed, and in his right mind;" but, instead of falling at His feet Who had wrought that incredible change, and seeking for themselves some gifts of grace, they could think only of their miserable herds, and fill their minds with superstitious fear, lest some worse loss should befall them. They saw in the Saviour of men's souls "no beauty that they should desire Him," and begged Him to "depart out of their coasts." It was in accordance with a mysterious and perplexing principle, often illustrated in Scripture History, by which men estranged from God come offering a petition which is not refused, that the prayer of the Gerasenes was at once complied with. The request was granted, but how fatal the gift! "He gave them their own desire: they were not disappointed of their lust."

Ezek. xiv. 4.

Ps. lxxviii.
30, P.B.V.

And this was the second request. "When He

was come unto the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him"—but that was refused!

Where could he have been better, than where he craved to be? Where in the whole wide world could he find greater safety from a relapse into the power from which he had been rescued, than in the companionship of his Deliverer? But He sent him away. The Gerasenes may drive the Master from their shores, but the servant must remain, because God would not leave Himself without a witness. Westcott, Gospel Miracles, 83 ff. It was possible that the man, whom they knew, might win acceptance where the Stranger was feared, and so He left him behind, that as he had been a signal illustration in the neighbourhood of the working of sin and evil, he might henceforward be seen as a living monument of the transforming power of grace and mercy. Thou "when thou art converted S. Luke xxii. 32. strengthen thy brethren."

Now, setting aside the interpretation which regards the destruction of the swine as a penalty inflicted on Jews for the transgression of the Law, men's minds have been exercised to find any satisfactory justification for an apparently unnecessary waste of life and property. In considering the question we can only appeal to one other miracle S. Matt. xxi. 19.

bearing any analogy to it; for often as Jesus exercised His almighty power to give life, He exercised it only twice to take it away. In neither case was it human life. It was that of the lowest of the creatures in the animal, and of the fig-tree in the vegetable, world. It is almost incredible that with all the provocation that He received, in all the perilous circumstances in which He was placed, He should never have revenged Himself, as men are so eager to do, or have taken away another's life to save His Own.

It should fill us with the highest conception of His superhuman meekness; and our wondering admiration should be increased by the realisation of the fact that, almost immediately after His departure, one of the very first miracles wrought by the power which He had delegated to the Apostles was for the destruction of two human beings. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were no doubt a most salutary warning to the infant Church, of the imperative obligation of perfect truth and candour; but, looking at our Lord's acts, we are sure that what seemed inevitable to S. Peter would somehow have been avoided by Him, if only because He came expressly to save life, and not to destroy it.

Acts v. 5-10

We shall, however, find ample justification for the two solitary exceptions which the history of His miracles has left on record. The withering of the fig-tree was a parable in act, designed to impress the Jews when words had completely failed; and the destruction of the swine resulted in the salvation of the man. Now, if it be in accordance with Divine Providence that so many animals should be slaughtered daily to sustain men's bodies, we need feel no surprise that so great a sacrifice should be made to save an immortal soul. And when we realise what the "possession" had been, we can appreciate the difficulty the poor demoniac must have experienced in apprehending the possibility of deliverance. Not till he saw the evil spirits by which he had been tortured transferred to others—to the bodies of other creatures—not till he saw them working upon others the very effects from which he had suffered, could he be convinced of his salvation.

Alford on
S. Matt.
viii. 32.

Surely, then, "those who know the worth of a human soul—of a life restored to itself, to its fellow-men, and to God—will hesitate before they presume to say that this destruction of the swine was too dear a price to pay for its restoration."

Plumptre on
S. Matt.
viii. 32.

NOTES.

¹ Lightfoot says : " You may not improperly guess that these hogs belonged not to the Jews, but to the heathen dwelling among the Gadarene Jews ; for such a mixture was very usual in the cities and countries of the land of Israel."

² This seems to contradict what was said above ; but all that was intended there was that there were cases where " possession" was not necessarily the result of a sinful life.

³ Milman and some others have imagined that the swine were driven down the precipice by the demoniacs in a paroxysm of frenzy. This is inconsistent with the narrative, which lends our Lord's sanction to what they did. Paulus supposes that they began fighting among themselves, and in the confusion fell over the cliff.

XXIV.

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter.

S. MARK V. 21-24, 35-43.

21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto Him: and He was nigh unto the sea. 22. And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet, 23. and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray Thee*, come and lay *Thy* hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. 24. And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. . . . 35. While He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, *Thy daughter is dead*: why troublest thou the Master any further? 36. As soon as Jesus heard the word *that was* spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James,

and John the brother of James. 38. And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth *the* tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when He was come in, He saith unto them, Why make ye *this* ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put *them* all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, TALITHA CUMI; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43. And He charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

S. JOHN closes his Gospel with a declaration that if all the things which Jesus did "should be written every one, ... even the world

S. John
xxi. 25.

S. Luke
vii. 11-16.
S. John
xi. 1-54.

itself could not contain the books that should be written." Among the unrecorded miracles, we can hardly doubt, there were many instances of restoration to life. The Evangelists were guided by the Holy Spirit to hand down the history of only three, and a careful consideration of these has suggested that they were selected of set purpose to represent Christ's power over death in all its stages. The little daughter of the ruler of the synagogue¹ had only just passed away, and was lying on her death-bed. When the widow's son at Nain was raised from the bier, he had been dead twenty-four hours or less—for that was the longest time allowed to elapse before the funeral² in the East. Lazarus, again, had been buried out of sight for a considerable period, and the process of decomposition had set in.

Trench,
Miracles,
198.

It is possible, moreover, that there was a further object in the choice, viz., to show forth "a progressive development of the Almighty power," the raising of Lazarus being, so to speak, a more difficult work than that of the widow's son, and this again than that of Jairus' daughter.

S. Matt.
ix. 18-26.

Now, while the two other miracles find a place each in one Gospel only, this last is narrated in no less than three. There must therefore be some

circumstances connected with it deserving more than
common attention.

S. Luke
viii. 41-56.

An apparent discrepancy in the several reports of the father's words has been a stumbling-block to critical minds ; but when rightly interpreted, it will be found confirmatory of the truth, the variety of expression carrying with it an air of naturalness that is quite convincing. He had left his child to all human appearance at the point of death ; life was ebbing so fast that when he found Jesus he realised the worst, and, throwing himself at His feet, spoke of her as "dead ;" but as he talked with Him, a flash of hope seems to have crossed his soul that she may have revived ; and there is a corresponding change in his language,—he had left her "at the point of death." Those who know anything of the bed-side watching by the sick and dying will readily understand this alternation of hope and fear, and find no difficulty in the fact that the distracted father should express himself at one moment in one way, at the next in another.

S. Aug
de Consens.
Evang. ii. 28.
S. Matt.
ix. 18.

Jesus yielded to his entreaty, and went with him ; and we can well imagine that no time would be lost, and the least delay anxiously avoided. But suddenly Christ deliberately stopped ; something unusual had occurred, and it was necessary that it

should be cleared up before they went any further. He had felt a hand upon Him; it was no common touch, no mere jostling of the crowd, but a touch that had drawn healing virtue from His Person, and that eager hurrying multitude was bidden to halt, till the one who had done this thing should be discovered. We can almost see the agonised expression which must have clouded the poor father's face. He did not dare to remonstrate, but every moment was precious, and minutes must have seemed like hours. Was it unkind, then, of Jesus to delay at such a time? There were some, no doubt, who thought so. Even S. Peter answered impatiently; but we are sure that One Who was all tenderness could never be really cruel, or do otherwise than feel the keenest sympathy with that intense anxiety. Indeed, so far from that stoppage being a sign of indifference, it was actually designed—fore-ordained for the father's good. Christ knew, what Jairus did not know, viz., that the child was already dead. He knew also that there was far too little of that faith in his heart which was indispensable for the exercise of miraculous power. There was none of the "venture" which our Lord loved, of the undoubting conviction that He was able to do all that was asked of Him, no simple appeal to "speak the word

only" which marked implicit trust;³ and in His tender compassion He took these means to strengthen his faith by a demonstration of power.

The message which was brought to him from home at that moment, was calculated to have the very opposite effect. Perhaps Jairus's friends had discouraged his journey; they may have heard as yet of no one being raised from the dead; and it would be useless to send for One to heal her sickness, when she would certainly be dead before the Physician could arrive. And they lost no time in hurrying after him, as soon as their fears were fulfilled, and brought the tidings, "Thy daughter is dead," and urged him at once to return: "Why troublest⁴ thou the Master any further?"

Now see how wonderfully all had been ordered. Had those messengers arrived ever so little sooner, Jairus might have lost all heart, and abandoned his petition, and his little child would never have been restored to him again. But their arrival exactly coincided with His miraculous cure of the woman with the issue of blood; and as He had just given proof of His power, so again He interposes with further encouragement at the critical juncture: "Be not afraid, only believe."

And what He meant by His words was simply

this: "Thou hast seen a poor sufferer healed of her infirmity by the touch of faith; cherish the same undoubting confidence in My power, and thou shalt see greater things than this."

That act of healing and that word of assurance swept away all lingering doubt, and he went on his way rejoicing. But when they reached the house, they were confronted by every sign and token of death. It was filled with hired mourners, persons whose duty it was to make death appear as sad as possible, a thing to vex the mind with the most painful associations.

Jer. ix.
17, 18.
Thomson,
The Land
and the Book,
102, 103.

We can conceive no greater contrast than that between the wild shrieks and wailings of the mercenaries, and the calm consolatory utterance of Jesus: "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."⁵ He did not mean that life had not fled, because there could be no doubt on that point, but that death was not what most men thought. "In the eyes of God we are not dead, we only sleep. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and when He is near, death is but a sleep." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

Theophyl.
in Luc.
viii. 52.

S. John
xi. 11.

And when Jesus had rebuked the tumult, He entered the chamber where she lay, and, taking her

hand, said, "Talitha cumi,"⁶ and she obeyed the word of omnipotence, and arose and walked. No wonder S. Mark should have recorded the exceeding astonishment with which the miracle was witnessed; for in all probability it was one of the earliest occasions upon which He had shown Himself triumphant over death.

His last command was that "something should be given her to eat." In its literal application it speaks of the tenderest forethought, but when spiritually interpreted it involves a principle too often lost sight of, in the restoration of those that are morally dead. To awaken the sinner to a sense of his guilt, and to draw him up out of the degradation in which he has been sunk, is only the first step, albeit a most important one; but the restored life needs proper sustenance; and unless fresh help and unfailing food be provided, "the last state of that man is worse than the first."

If the history of many of those Missions which are such a characteristic of this generation were to be written, there would be tale after tale of reclaimed sinners relapsing into sin, simply because efforts were relaxed when the excitement had passed; because conversion was regarded as the end,

rather than the first step only, in the ever-progressing advance of a Godward life.

The Church's true mission is to follow in her Master's steps, and, reading the inner meaning of His acts and words, first to take the sleeping soul by the hand and bid it "arise," and then after the awakening to strengthen it with the life-giving food of Him Who said, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

S. John
vi. 54.

NOTES.

¹ Jairus was the president of the elders of the synagogue, by whom all its affairs were managed. Lightfoot, quoting from the Talmud, says that he gave orders who should read the Prophets, who should recite the Phylacteries, and who should pass before the Ark. The subordinate officers were the "Delegate," who read the prayers; the Chazzan, or deacon; and the Batlanim, whose exact office is much disputed.

² Burial must take place before the expiration of the day on which one died. For all the particulars connected with an Oriental funeral, cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 99-106.

³ Nothing short of our Lord's presence would satisfy him. He must come and take some outward means for her restoration—"Come and lay Thy hand upon her."

⁴ "Troublest."---The original word is almost untranslatable. It means to flay, excoriate; hence to vex, annoy.

⁵ Some writers have assumed from this that she was only in a trance, and that no miracle was performed: but our Lord uses the

same language of Lazarus ; and in Jewish phraseology death is most commonly spoken of as sleep ; cf. Lightfoot *in loco*.

⁶ S. Mark alone gives the very words used by our Lord, as on other occasions. Talitha is a term of tenderness and endearment. S. Peter must have remembered this when he said, "Tabitha, arise" (Acts ix. 40).

XXV.

The Woman with an Issue of Blood.

S. MARK V. 25-34

25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26. and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27. when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. 28. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of *that* plague. 30. And Jesus immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? 31. And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? 32. And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. 34. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

THERE is a well-known series of pictures in Christian Art known as "The Stations" on the Way of the Cross. In one of these our Blessed Lord lies prostrate on the ground, and a woman is wiping the great drops of sweat from His face with her veil. That act of tender sympathy was regarded by the early Church as so Christlike a thing that she clothed the episode in a beautiful and romantic

form, maintaining that the impression of His face was left upon the veil;¹ and the sister of mercy who ministered to Him in His distress has come down to posterity by the name of Veronica, or "The True Likeness."

According to one of the Apocryphal Gospels,² which is known for its preservation of some probable traditions, she was the woman for whom Jesus had wrought this miraculous cure. If the identity may be assumed, it was not merely an act of womanly tenderness and compassion, but a grateful return for remembered loving-kindness.

Further, as corroborative of the truth of this miracle of healing, the Father of Ecclesiastical History testifies, three centuries after its occurrence, that he had seen at Cæsarea Philippi, which was said to have been her native town, a monument erected in commemoration of the event. "At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her like one entreating. Opposite to this there is another, of a man, erect, of the same material, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman." This monument Eusebius associates with the case before us by a superstitious belief, which he says

² The Gospel of Nicodemus, v. 29.

Eusebius, vii. 18.

prevailed in the neighbourhood—viz., that there was a mysterious plant growing at the base, which year by year, as soon as it reached as high as the hem of the brazen garment, became a kind of antidote to all manner of sickness and disease.

The circumstances of the cure are very familiar. Our Lord was on His way to the bedside of a dying child, followed by a crowd of people, all expectant and eager to see for themselves an exhibition of His healing power. Their curiosity had been excited by the rumours of His “mighty deeds” in Capernaum, nigh where they were.

Jesus was probably clad as the Jewish Rabbi invariably was.³ On His head He would wear the Oriental turban, on His feet sandals or shoes, according to the season of the year; His inner or under dress was the close-fitting tunic, reaching almost to the ground, and gathered in with a girdle: it was “without seam, woven from the top throughout,” while over this was thrown “the Tallith,” with the hems or fringes for which such careful directions were given in the Law, and to which such deep significance was attached: “Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture,” . . . “that ye may remember, and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God.”

Deut.
xxii. 12.
Numb.
xv. 40.

It was, no doubt, from the almost superstitious reverence that had grown up for this part of the dress, that the woman was impelled to grasp it, in the hope of being cured. For few would deny that there was a strong element of superstition in her faith. Our Lord, however, judged her according to the standard of her times, and saw underlying her conduct at least the principle of that which He ever regarded as a claim upon His recognition. And so her touch was immediately responded to. But He would not let her depart till her faith had been lifted on to a higher level, and she was thoroughly convinced how great things she was capable of effecting by it. Hence the conversation that followed. "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?" The question brought no answer, but it provoked a remonstrance from the disciples. We find from S. Luke that S. Peter was their mouth-S. Luke
viii. 45.piece. It creates a little surprise that we should be indebted to another Evangelist for the knowledge of this, because that Apostle was so careful in reminding S. Mark of much that told to his own disparagement. But it was no idle question, as they supposed. There were many around Him who had

need to be healed, sick, no doubt, with countless infirmities, and they had touched Him again and again as they pressed upon Him, but they were not cured as she was. And Christ would tell them why it was. They had not touched in faith.

The poor woman had not dared to come forward, knowing that her disease made her unclean. She was afraid that, if she threw herself in His way, some of the bystanders to whom she was known would cry out "Unclean," and her shame would be exposed in the presence of the multitude. So it was that she pushed as closely as she could, and then grasped the fringe of His robe, and felt at once that the issue of her blood was stanchèd. And when Jesus called for her "that had done this thing," she hesitated for a moment ; she heard the remonstrance of S. Peter, and hoped, perhaps, that nothing more would be said ; but as the Saviour insisted, and looked round, it may be He caught her anxious look, for "she came, and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth."

And what followed ? We lose some of the force of the language in the English translation : "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee *whole* ; go in peace, and be *whole* of thy plague." They are different words⁴ in the original, and the first is greater than

the last,—“Thy faith hath saved thee”—saved thee not only from bodily infirmity, but from the soul’s sickness: go in peace, and carry away deliverance from the lower, as a pledge and witness of that which is higher.

The story teaches the rightful place of faith in the work of salvation. That none can be saved without faith, is so plainly set forth in Holy Scripture that “he may run that readeth it;” but at the same time it is taught with equal emphasis, though it may be more through acts than words, that it is the touch of Christ which effects the cure, whether His hands are laid upon us, or ours are stretched forth to lay hold upon Him. This poor sufferer had faith before she touched; she believed, however imperfect her appreciation of the reality, that Jesus was possessed of the means of healing, and that, though every other remedy had failed, He could still bring relief. But it was not till she laid hold of something external to herself, till she brought herself into actual contact with Him, that her end was gained.

S. Mark

xvi. 16.

S. John

iii. 14, 15, 36.

Eph. ii. 8.

It is the same in the Christian life now. We have faith in the efficacy of the Incarnation for the purification from all sin, and the Sacraments are given for the application of its virtue to each indi-

vidual. They are the means by which we may follow up the internal conviction by the external act; by which the faith which satisfies us of the all-sufficiency of Christ, may make us partakers of the Divine Nature, and quicken us by the life-giving power of His Body and Blood. Herein faith and works, the inner and the outward, are so combined, that they not only cannot be severed, but that the result, so happily produced by the combination, may in accordance with Scripture phraseology be ascribed to the one or the other.

God the Holy Ghost tells us by the inspired Evangelist that the drying up of the fountain of blood was the immediate consequence of her touch. God the Son, on the other hand, gives her the assurance of His Own lips that it was her faith that made her whole.

S. Mark
v. 29, 34.

NOTES.

¹ It is an interesting study to discover the idea underlying the mediæval legends:—*e.g.* in the betrothal of S. Catharine to the Infant Jesus is represented the union of the pure and holy Christian soul with the one absorbing object of its love; in the leafy covering into which S. Etheldreda's staff budded to protect her from the heat, the shelter which her great foundation at Ely offered to many generations. For that of Veronica cf. Eucharistic Poems by A. Gurney.

² The date of the Apocryphal Gospels is uncertain, but some belong to the second and third centuries.

³ Our Lord is usually represented without any head-dress. Edersheim has shown in an interesting chapter upon Jewish Dress that it was held as disrespectful to go with a bare head. The under garment was called Chithuna, and is represented in the Greek *χιτών*. There was another upper garment besides the Tallith, called Golta. Both had fringes, Zizith, but which Jesus wore is doubtful. The four articles—the turban, the girdle, the sandals or shoes, and the Tallith—would be divided severally to the four soldiers, while the fifth, the Chithuna, was raffled for by all. Cf. Life and Times, i. 621-6.

⁴ *σέσωκε*, the same expression as in verse 28—saved or delivered—often used in deliverance from bodily ailments, with a further sense underlying it. *ὕγιής*, whole, healthy, sound.

XXVI.

The Carpenter at Nazareth.

S. MARK VI. 1-6.

1. And He went out from thence, and came into His own country; and His disciples follow Him. 2. And when the sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *Man* these things? and what wisdom *is this* which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands? 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and of Joses, and of Juda,

and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him. 4. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5. And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid *His* hands upon a few sick *folk*, and healed *them*. 6. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. And He went round about the villages, teaching.

JESUS turned from Capernaum to visit once more the scenes where His early years had been spent. Nazareth was a very different place from that busy town on the lake which was astir with all the activity of a thriving trade. It was one of the most obscure of Galilean villages; like its neighbours, Nain and Endor, the abode of oil-pressers and husbandmen. It once must have had a Jewish name, but it found no place of record either in the Bible or the Talmud.

Meyer on
S. Matt.
xiii. 54.

After the reception which our Lord had met with some nine months before, we are surprised that He should have revisited it, but His human love of home quickened forgiveness, and though the Nazarenes had been filled with wrath by His first sermon in their synagogue, and attempted His life, ample time had elapsed for different feelings to spring up. At all events it was worth while to give them another opportunity; and so He found Himself once more in the old home, lodging no doubt under the same roof with His mother and brethren¹ and sisters.

On the Sabbath-day He joined the crowd of village-worshippers, and made His way to the synagogue, where for nearly twenty years He had been a constant attendant. Everything must have been perfectly familiar to Him: the emblem² over the entrance, the holy Lamp, the Ark with the Sacred Rolls, the reader's desk, or preacher's chair. What memories they revived of bygone years,—years of eager expectation when He must have longed for His work to begin! And now it was far advanced, far at least according to its destined measurement. What His thoughts were, none can tell, but we may be sure that when the Ruler asked Him to read the appointed Lessons,³ and address

S. Luke
iv. 28, 29.

Herzog,
Real-Encycl.
s. Synag.
Vitranga
de Synag.

the congregation, His heart must have kindled with even more than wonted desire to tell the glad tidings that He had to bring.

It was the custom on the Sabbath-day for an interpreter⁴ to stand by the reader and translate for the people the Hebrew they had forgotten during their exile in Babylon.⁵ But none such was needed that day. The language of the Old Testament and the vernacular Aramaic would be alike familiar to our Lord :⁶ and so the Haphtarah would be read, and the explanation be given by the same lips. But the Preacher was again to be disappointed. It was almost a repetition of what had happened before. True, there was no outburst of violence, but they were filled with incredulity and amazement. There was no surrender of their old prejudices, no throwing of themselves at His feet in the simplicity of faith, no open confession or outpouring of regret that they could ever have doubted the truth of what they heard. Their hearts were hardened against conviction ; and so they tried to divert their thoughts from the substance of His preaching by recalling the circumstances of His youth, when He had lived and moved among them, a common man like themselves.

They spoke to each other of His cottage home,

His father, and His kinsfolk ; and the recollection of the carpenter's shop in which He had worked took such possession of their minds, that they had no power to understand the logic of facts and the tremendous change they had brought about.

It is one of the few places where the veil is removed from His early life. He was brought up to the trade of a village carpenter. He worked with Joseph in building and repairing boats for the lake, in making furniture for the synagogue, in cutting down poles for tents, and, according to an early testimony, in shaping ploughs and yokes for oxen. When at home, His bench would be placed, as is the custom now, in the public way ; when abroad, He would find His occupation in such hamlets as Nain or Cana, or perhaps on the beach at Bethsaida and Capernaum. Such sparing notice by inspired historians teaches us to give no credence to the Apocryphal legends⁷ of the wonders that He wrought both in play and at work. Had there been in His life at Nazareth even the least exhibition of superhuman capacities, it would have been on every one's lips, in a village where everything was known and talked of ; and instead of being amazed at His wisdom, when in later years He taught in their synagogue, the people would at

Justin
Martyr.

once have regarded it as the fulfilment of His early promise.

No; the brief question, "Is not this the carpenter?" leaves no doubt upon the mind that no "mighty works" had been done by His hands before His ministry began. None can doubt that there were abundant proofs even then that He was no common Person: a perfect Boy, a perfect Youth, a perfect Man, perfect at each stage as He passed through it, but with no unveiling of that which was His from the beginning.

Col. ii. 9.

Heb. i. 3.

He in "Whom dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily," Who was "the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person," lived in such obscurity that His neighbours only remembered Him as an undistinguished member of Joseph's household.

Acts xx. 34.

1 Cor. iv. 12.

It is quite possible that his fellow-villagers did not intend the contempt such a question conveys to our ears. Perhaps they wished only to be sure of His identity. The Jews, we know, did not consider it mean to work at a trade. It was the duty of every one, from the priest to the peasant, to learn some craft, and S. Paul was not ashamed to labour with his hands for his daily bread.

But whatever their motive, the fact remains:

they rejected His message, and evoked from His lips the oft-repeated complaint, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." It is only a nobler dress for the commonest proverb, than which none is truer, "Familiarity breeds contempt." He had come to bring them an abundant blessing, but His hand was stayed. S. Matthew tells us that "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." S. Mark, as though bent on every occasion upon expressing His tender sympathy with suffering, points out that an exception was only made, to heal some that were sick.

S. Matt.
xiii. 58.

Now from this short notice of our Lord's earthly occupation during His preparation for His mission, we may gather some fresh proof that "His ways are not our ways." It was a poor beginning, as man measures, for the greatest work, to spend so many years at a carpenter's bench. For though there may have been nothing dishonourable in learning a trade, we can conceive of no weaker credentials for One Who claimed to regenerate the world, than that He had sat at no Rabbi's feet in the schools of wisdom and knowledge, but had spent thirty years in the meanest cottage among an ignorant and unlettered population. And history tells how often

Sozomen,
Hist. Eccles.
v. 8.

His followers were reproached with His origin. When Julian in his persecution was waging war successfully against the Faith, it is said that one of his officers asked a Christian with scorn and contempt what his Master, the carpenter's Son, was doing then. "Making a coffin," was the meek reply of the injured saint. And soon the news was brought that the apostate Emperor was dead. Celsus, also another great adversary of the Christians, had insolently upbraided them for being followers of One Who had worked as a labouring man.

To those who read the lesson of those early years aright, a working life wears a far different aspect. Henceforward it is surrounded by a halo of dignity and honour; and it is no insignificant consequence that He should have made it impossible for ever that any man should be ashamed to work.

NOTES.

¹ For their actual relationship cf. i. 116-123.

² The common emblem, judging from the remains which have been found, was the Seven-branched Candlestick, which was singularly appropriate for a place where instruction or illumination was one of the primary objects. For a variation from the above at Tell Hâm cf. i. 41.

³ For Lessons the Law was divided into fifty-four Parashahs, a word signifying sections, "separated off." Cf. Pharisee, "sepa-

ratist." The Prophets were divided into Haphtarahs, from a verb "to dismiss," because the congregation usually separated shortly after this part of the service. Cf. Acts xiii. 14, 15. After the Return from Captivity it was usual to read the Law only in the synagogues. This was stopped by Antiochus Epiphanes, but after the revolt of the Maccabees Simon restored it, and added the Prophets. Cf. S. Luke iv. 17.

⁴ He was called Methurgeman.

⁵ After the Return the dialect they used in Palestine was that known as Aramaic. At the same time the Quadrate form of Hebrew letters was introduced, and the Scriptures were rewritten in this character by Ezra.

⁶ The Old Testament Hebrew was only studied by Rabbis. We may be quite sure that our Lord would read the Scriptures in the original language, and not be satisfied with a version.

⁷ The Gospel of the Infancy and others introduce Him as working wonders from His earliest years, *e.g.* to relieve Joseph, and correct his mistakes in carpentering.

XXVII.

The Mission of the Twelve.

S. MARK VI. 7-13.

7. And He called unto *Him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; 8. and commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: 9. but *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. 10. And He said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many *that were* sick, and healed *them*.

FOR the first time the Twelve fulfil their office as Apostles. They leave their Master's side, and are sent forth as missionaries to hasten His Kingdom. S. Mark notifies the change by appropriating to them in this place the new title of Apostleship.

S. Mark
vi. 30.

S. Matt.
x. 6.

The mission upon which they were sent was to the Jews, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The second Evangelist says nothing of the large mission to the Gentiles, but it fitly finds a place of

record in the Gospel of one whose watchword was S. Luke x. 1 the Universality of Christ's Kingdom.¹

That Jesus yearned from the beginning for the emancipation of the world none can doubt, but He Who did all things "according to the counsel of His will" would not anticipate the orderly sequence of events: "to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles." To have disregarded that, would have excited most bitterly the jealousy of His countrymen, as well as committed the Apostles to a work for which they were by no means prepared. The first qualification for a message of glad tidings to an alien people was the eradication of national antipathies, and nothing but a continued witness of the broadest sympathy could effect such a result. The hatred of the "Sons of Thunder" for the Samaritans survived wellnigh three years' companionship with the Saviour of the world, and there is no reason for supposing that they were more prejudiced than the rest. S. Luke ix. 54.

"He began to send them forth by two and two." It would have been well for the Church in all ages if the principle laid down at the outset could have been generally maintained. There is perhaps no sphere in which companionship is more desirable. To be called upon to witness sin and misery in their worst forms, to see the disease spreading and eating

the life out of a people, and to find oneself powerless to check it through distrust and unbelief, brings with it a depression of spirits unknown in its intensity in any other field of labour. If, as so often happens, the labourer has none to take counsel with, none to cheer and sympathise with him, it becomes almost unbearable.

Christ knew all this, and sent them forth, not singly, but "two and two," that they might hold sweet converse together, and strengthen and correct one another wherever strength and correction were needed. And when we study their several characteristics, we see how careful He was in pairing them together. The fiery impetuous Peter is coupled with the meditative Andrew; James, so small of stature, with the lion-like Jude; the fanatical Zealot with the cold calculating Traitor, that the enthusiasm of the one might quicken the other's reserved and despairing spirit.

The same principle is being happily revived in the present generation of missionary enterprise, and Colleges of priests are being planted by the Universities in Central Africa and Northern India for mutual help and encouragement in a most difficult work.

Our Lord's next care was to make the mission in

a sense self-supporting. "The workman was worthy 1 Tim. v. 18. of his meat;" and if they went forth in simple dependence upon their Master, He would put it into men's hearts to supply their wants. They were to lay aside everything that would impede their progress in the way of baggage, every provision for the luxuries and conveniences of travel, and their "bread should be given them, and their waters be sure," Isa. xxxiii. 16. and therewith they must be content.

It is true that the East is proverbial for hospitality, and that it was a favourable country in which to try the experiment. To this day the Arab opens his door to the traveller, and if you meet him abroad he is ready to share with you his only piece of bread, or the last drop that is left in his wine-skin. We can hardly expect, therefore, the same measure of support to be extended to missions at large; but there cannot be a question that people for the most part value religion in proportion to what it costs them. The intense love which we are told heathen converts entertain for their churches arises not infrequently from the fact that they have built them at their own expense, and often, too, with their own hands.

No doubt His first purpose was to make them realise that they were going forth not in their own

but in His strength ; but we may not forget that a further reason has been suggested for the command to leave behind their shoes and purse.²

These things were always laid aside before entering the Temple. It was a symbolical provision that in the service of God there should mingle no thought of the affairs of the world. Even so it may be there was reflected back from that old command the idea that the mission on which they were being sent was one which demanded the total surrender of all their energy and will for Christ's cause.

Yet further, before their departure our Lord quickened their sense of responsibility by reminding them of the terrible consequences awaiting any who should reject the message with which they were burdened. Sodom and Gomorrha had perished in one of the most signal of God's punishments, but no messenger had been sent direct from Him to warn them of the consequences of their awful sin. They, on the other hand, were going with credentials such as no ambassador had ever borne, and the guilt of impenitence would be proportioned to the force with which the truth was revealed. If those to whom they went turned a deaf ear to their words, then let them know that they had forfeited their

birthright; they were no longer God's people, but outcast heathen; and the very dust of their land must be shaken in displeasure from the Apostles' feet, to symbolise that they were left to their own uncleanness. Deut. xiii. 17.

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick." S. Mark alone mentions the outward sign that accompanied the healing. The use of oil in medical treatment was widely prevalent, but, apart from its application by the good Samaritan, it is only mentioned twice elsewhere in Holy Scripture. S. Luke x. 34.
Isa. i. 6. Isaiah clearly has it in his mind when, speaking of the wounds from which Judah suffered, he says, "they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment," or more correctly, "oil."

"Is any sick among you?" writes S. James. "Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord." S. James v. 14. It was an outward act accompanying the exercise of unusual power,³ whether it was the prayer of the faithful rulers of the Church, or the preternatural gifts of healing with which the Apostles were intrusted. The purpose that it served was the same as the anointing of the eyes of

the blind by the Lord's hand : it was for the quickening of the patient's faith, without which no cure could be wrought.

Now the combination of the twofold work of preaching repentance and healing the sick, first formed in this temporary mission, has continued throughout the history of the Church. Care for the body and thought for the soul may never be separated without harm and loss in ministerial usefulness. It was the testimony of one of the bravest missionaries⁴ that he owed no small measure of his success to the fact that he was possessed of the knowledge of medicine, which enabled him to work many bodily cures, and win confidence for the reception of his message.

Dan. xii. 3. It is the pride and glory of the English Church that her priests are the truest friends of the sick and needy; and though it is promised that "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars," our Lord has taught us that when we shall be called to give in the account of our stewardship, the inquiry will mainly turn on what deeds of mercy and compassion we have shown. It will be to those who have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, that He will give the invitation, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit

the kingdom prepared for you ;" for " inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

NOTES.

¹ S. Luke is emphatically "the Historian of the Universal Gospel." Probably he was prompted to take this view mainly by S. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. The number 70 was regarded as the symbol of the nations of the world, taken from Deut. xxxii. 8. At the Feast of Tabernacles 70 oxen were offered in sacrifice for the Gentiles. Cf. Talm. Bab. Sukkah, 55, 6.

² Edersheim refers to the Rabbinic injunction, "not to enter the Temple-precincts with staff, shoes (mark, not sandals), and a money-girdle." It told the worshippers that they were to "be wholly absorbed in their service."—*Life and Times*, i. 643.

³ Anointing the sick with oil is not spoken of from New Testament times till the beginning of the fourth century. It is noticed in an Epistle of Innocent I. to Decentius in 416 A.D. It is also referred to in the *Orationes ad visitandum Infirmorum* of the Gregorian Sacramentary, A.D. 590, after which it is often recognised both in the Eastern and Western Churches. In the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI. it was provided that the sick man might be anointed "if he desired it." In the Primitive Church its object was the recovery of the sick through supernatural agency ; now it is only administered in the Roman Church when recovery is considered impossible. Cf. *Catech. Trident.* ii. vi. 14.

⁴ Dr. Livingstone in Central Africa. His case may be used to illustrate the principle, though his doctrine was not that of the Church.

XXVIII.

Herodias and her Daughter.

S. MARK VI. 14-29.

14. And king Herod heard *of Him*; (for His Name was spread abroad :) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. 18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: 20. for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; 22. and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23. And he swore unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. 25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. 26. And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with *him*, he would not reject her. 27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, 28. and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. 29. And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

HEROD ANTIPAS was only "king" by courtesy. His father had originally intended to bequeath his whole kingdom to him, but he altered his

Josephus,
Antiq.
xvii. 8. 1.

will on his death-bed, and, dividing it into four portions, left one only to him, two to his brother Archelaus, and the remainder to his half-brother Philip.¹ His right designation, therefore, was that

Josephus
Antiq. xvii.
II. 4.

which he more usually receives of "tetrarch." Herod the Great had been engaged in a long and troublesome war with a powerful border tribe, ruled over by an Arabian prince or Emir called Aretas. When at last it was brought to a close, it was an article in the conditions of peace that the princess of the Damascenes should marry one of his sons. Antipas was selected for the unhappy union. Being based upon political convenience, with no pretence of real affection, it was destined to be broken when ~~the~~ strain came.]

Another of his half-brothers, Philip, who had been disinherited from any share in the kingdom, had been married in his father's lifetime to his niece, Herodias, daughter of the eldest brother whom Herod the Great had cruelly put to death. This, too, was a most ill-assorted marriage, for her husband was more than double her age, and there was no pretence even of love and affection between them. She was of a passionate and imperious nature, and chafed at Philip's ignoble descent, for his mother was a Boëthusian, while her own was a

Josephus,
Wars,
I. 30. 7.

Josephus,
Antiq.
xviii. 5. 1.

Maccabean princess ; but what galled her even more bitterly was her exclusion from all the magnificence and pomp of the regal courts. [So it was, that when the tetrarch Antipas was visiting her husband at Rome, where he lived in a private capacity, she intrigued with him to repudiate his Arabian wife and establish herself in her place.]

He yielded to her infamous design, and, in violation of every principle of law and morality, took her to his palace at Tiberias to succeed his rightful but dishonoured queen, who had fled to her own people, through fear of being poisoned by her wicked rival.

It was an ill-fated step for Antipas ; for crime led on to crime, lust to murder, and both brought a terrible retribution, in war and depredation, exile and ruin.

The profligacy which was such a marked feature of the Roman Empire at this period had doubtless infected the Province of Syria, but the feelings of the people were shocked by such an act of unblushing immorality in high places. And John the Baptist was but their mouthpiece when he raised his voice against the adulterous union : " It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

Herodias was not a woman to tolerate such

reproof, and it was not long before she succeeded in silencing his voice: she dreaded the possibility of Herod's being stung by remorse under the vehemence of his remonstrance, and putting her away.

Antipas also was in fear lest the people might be stirred by his eloquence to rise in rebellion, and so John was cast into prison. The distant fortress of ^{Josephus, Antiq. xviii. 5. 2.} Machærus was chosen for his incarceration, mainly to remove him as far as possible from the machinations of the queen, for Herod well knew her revengeful spirit, and shrank from the additional odium of the murder of a man whom the people loved, and of whose fearless integrity he himself was not insensible. Indeed, such was the fascination of the Baptist's character, that his words, with all the bitterness of their sting, with all the pangs of conscience they must have stirred, did nevertheless give him pleasure to hear, for we are told "He was much perplexed,"² or, if the ordinary reading be correct, with a strange inconsistency in which his better nature triumphed for a time, "he did many things" under his influence, and "heard him gladly." But at last the opportunity came for which the ~~deep designing adulteress was always watching.~~ The king's divorce of his Arabian wife led to the

Josephus,
Wars,
iii. 3. 3.

proclamation of war. The desperate father, whose warlike spirit had made the great Herod quail—"the old desert lion, whose claws had been more than once felt in Sebaste and Sepphoris"—took up arms to avenge his outraged child, and the forces of the Tetrarch were being massed on the frontier. Before they crossed, Herod, taking the occasion of his birthday, entertained the chief captains and civil authorities to a great banquet in the castle of Machærus. Considering the object of the war, we can well imagine that the jealousy of the guilty queen would be excited to the highest pitch by the presence of the officers of the army. To ingratiate herself and make her cause more popular with those who had undertaken to defend it, she persuaded her daughter, the beautiful Salome, to submit to an act of no little condescension for their gratification. She placed herself in the degraded position of the professional dancing-girls, whose office it was by immodest arts to please the tastes of a licentious court.]

The design succeeded almost beyond her expectations. The royal host, flushed with wine, and gratified alike by the condescension and the shameless exhibition which pandered to his impure passion, offered her, with true Oriental exaggeration,

even the half of his kingdom as her reward. Esther vii. 2. Salome was in league with her mother, and knew that there was a prize she coveted far more than the greatest of earthly possessions: it was the riddance from the stern uncompromising censor of her sinful life. ¶ The supreme moment had arrived, and, after the briefest consultation with the author of the plot, the damsel asked for the Baptist's head to be brought to her without delay. The petition was granted; but, though the king felt some genuine sorrow that he had been betrayed into an unconditional promise, he had not the moral courage to see that no oath could be binding which involved the commission of a dreadful crime. One of his body-guard was despatched to the prisoner's cell, and the work of execution was soon completed. ¶ It reveals with an unmistakable clearness the revengeful nature of the real murderess, when tradition tells how, when the bleeding head was brought into the banquet-hall, she tore out the prophet's tongue in vindictive rage, just as the Roman lady³ had pierced that of the dead Orator, under Jeremy Taylor, ii. 310. whose denunciations she had smarted so bitterly. And so the tragedy ended; but its consequences lived on to haunt and vex the lives of those who perpetrated it; and they soon showed themselves.

The fame of Jesus was now at its height, and the interest of Antipas was awakened. All kinds of reports were spread abroad concerning His Person and Character. Many said that it was Elijah, whose reappearance every pious Jew was anxiously awaiting: and the raising of the widow's son at Nain shortly before this must have recalled the miracle at Sarepta and quickened the imagination.

1 Kings
xvii. 14.

Others thought it was one of the old prophets, most probably Jeremiah, come back to restore to them the Ark and the Urim and Thummim, which he had hidden ages before on the mountain where Moses died; and it has been suggested, not without reason, that the sadness of the Face that was never seen to laugh, helped to revive the memory of "the prophet of lamentation and tears and woe."

2 Macc.
ii. 4, 5, 7.

Plumptre,
Gospels, 98.

But there was yet a third belief that prevailed, for "it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead," and it is almost needless to say that it was this that laid hold of Herod's mind. No matter that he was by profession a Sadducee, with no faith in the Resurrection, his creed was forgotten in the superstitious dread which the memory of his crime fostered. The shade of the murdered prophet haunted him wherever he went; it followed him even beyond the seas; and the fear it engendered

S. Matt.
xiv. 2.
S. Luke
ix. 7.

became "a byword and a proverb in Roman society," and furnished material for the biting satire of a heathen poet;⁴ and was held up in the schools of the Stoics to illustrate the miseries of a guilty conscience.

Persius,
Sat. v. 180-8

A prolonged agony like this was a fitting penalty for such a heinous crime, but it did not exhaust the measure of Divine vengeance. Salome was accidentally beheaded,⁵ and has supplied to moralists a signal example of exact correspondence between crime and its retribution.

Nicephorus,
i. 20.
Jeremy
Taylor,
ii. 310.

Herodias, the evil genius of the king's life, shared his punishment, as she had shared his sin; for when he was banished from his kingdom,⁶ she followed his fallen fortunes to Gaul, and there, dethroned and dishonoured, the guilty pair wandered about till an ignoble death closed a career of almost unequalled guilt.

NOTES.

¹ Herod the Great had several wives, viz., Mariamne, a granddaughter of Hyrcanus, by whom he had Aristobulus, the father of Agrippa: Mariamne, a daughter of Simon, by whom he had Herod Philip, the husband of Herodias: Malthace, a Samaritan woman, the mother of Antipas and Archelaus: and Cleopatra, the mother of Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, etc. He had several other wives besides, but they are unconnected with Sacred History.

² ἡπόρει, for ἐπόλει is found in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

³ Fulvia, the wife of Mark Antony, in revenge for the Philippics, in which Cicero had attacked her husband, maltreated the Orator's body, and pierced his tongue through and through with a bodkin.

⁴ Dean Plumptre has suggested that in the lines,

“ But when the feast of Herod's birthday comes,

Thou mov'st thy lips, yet speak'st not in fear,

Thou keep'st the Sabbath of the circumcised,

And then there rise dark spectres of the dead,”

there is a direct allusion to this incident. Persius would have been a boy at the time of the Baptist's murder; for he died in the prime of life, A.D. 62. The circumstance may well have fixed itself in his mind.

⁵ She is said to have fallen through the ice, the sharp edge of which nearly severed her head from the body.

⁶ He was banished by Caligula to Lugdunum, from which place he went to Vienne.

XXIX.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

S. MARK VI. 30-44.

30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. 33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him. 34. And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things. 35. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, *This* is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed: 36. send them away, that they may go into the

country round about, and *into* the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39. And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among *them* all. 42. And they did all eat, and were filled. 43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. 44. And they that did eat *of* the loaves were about five thousand men.

S. MARK calls our attention to the motive¹ for our Lord's retreat from Galilee. It was the need of rest for the Apostles after the fatigues of their

mission. And what a very natural scene it is to which he introduces us! An expedition had gone out, and had been very successful, and those who had taken part in it were eager to narrate their experiences to Him Who had sent them forth. We can almost see Him seated in their midst as they pour into His ears the stirring tale. He knew it all even before they began, for His eye had never been off them, and His spirit never absent from their side, but He listened with patience as they told the wonders of their travel, of deaf ears unstopped, and blind eyes restored to sight, and fevers subdued by a single touch, and demoniacs dispossessed. No sooner was the story told than we fancy we can hear them in all the enthusiasm of success asking to be sent out again. But what was the answer? "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." It must have sounded cold and chilling, but He knew that exhausted nature must needs be repaired. "Man goeth forth to his labour until the evening"—but only so far. Night follows day, and rest succeeds to toil. So it was that our Lord counselled a temporary withdrawal from active work. The spot that he selected was one of the mountains on the further side of the lake, and they entered into the boat and rowed across. They could hardly

have enjoyed their seclusion more than an hour or two before their place of retreat was discovered, and He had no alternative but to come forth and preach to the crowds whom from the mountain range He saw gathering together. Many people, it is said, having observed the direction of the boat, "went afoot thither," crossing the Jordan where it flows into the lake, and going in search of Him in the "desert place," which lay on the north-eastern shore. Many more were pilgrims who had turned aside from the great road by which travellers went from Cæsarea Philippi and the northern district to Jerusalem. It was customary for the inhabitants of neighbouring villages to join together, both for security and for company, and to travel in one long caravan up to the Annual Feasts.² One such was then impending. It is very significant that all the Evangelists call special attention to the number of men, for it is well known that, except with certain limitations, the attendance of women was not required at the Feasts.

S. Luke
ix. 10.
S. John
vi. 4.

S. Luke
ii. 44.

Jesus was moved with compassion at the sight, and began at once to teach them, and heal their sicknesses, and as they hung spell-bound on His lips, and listened with rapt attention, the day wore on, and the disciples became anxious and fearful of

what might happen if such a great mass of people should be overtaken by nightfall far from shelter or human habitation. S. John gives us to understand that the difficulty of feeding the multitudes had been broached by our Lord Himself, and that He had consulted Philip on the possible sources of supply. Philip, making a rough calculation of the numbers, intimated that to purchase the requisite food would take above two hundred pence, a larger sum perhaps than they had at the time in the common purse. Our Lord, knowing what He would do, returned to His teaching; but the question which had been started exercised the minds of the Apostles, and as they were quite unable to devise any means for meeting the necessity, and it was now growing very late, they came to Him in a body, and asked Him to dismiss the people that they might go and provide for themselves. To their astonishment He declined, and said, "Give ye them to eat." They asked at once, perhaps in irony, whether He intended that they should carry out Philip's suggestion, but He replied by asking what amount of food they actually had. The answer, especially as recorded by S. John, showed the utter insufficiency of the store. There was a little boy—the fisher's lad, no doubt, whom they had brought from the boat to

carry their food—with five loaves, and those none of the best, for they were made of barley, and two small fishes,—not such as would satisfy hunger, but serving only to give relish³ and a savoury taste to their common bread.

But “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” No sooner did Christ see that the Apostles were satisfied that no ordinary means could avail, than He prepared for an exhibition of miraculous power. Let them make the men sit down on the grass. It was fresh and green at the time, for the spring rainfall was only just over; and the crowd was at once divided and broken up into manageable portions—that there might be no confusion, that none might be passed over or pushed aside—and arranged into “ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.” The peculiar word which is translated “ranks,”⁴ indicates that the people were seated in “separate detachments,” with sufficient space left to move freely between them; but it is right to mention that, according to another etymology, it signifies a “bed of herbs or flowers,” and its usage would then illustrate S. Mark’s picturesqueness, the bright Eastern costumes of the compact masses upon the brilliant green having suggested to an eye-witness a close resemblance to a bright and well-ordered garden.

Edersheim,
Life and
Times,
i. 684.

However this may be, when all was arranged He took the loaves and fishes into His hands, and, according to the Jewish ordinance, as the Head of the house in which He presided, "gave thanks," no doubt in the familiar form of "Grace:" "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the world, Who bringest forth bread from the earth." It was followed by a marvellous increase. The method or process of the multiplication is not revealed; whether it took place in Christ's hands, or in the hands of the disciples, it is impossible to say. S. Chrysostom accepts the latter supposition, and it would certainly seem the most convenient, and perhaps the most significant also. The result, however, was that all were filled. An almost startling announcement followed: "Gather up the fragments." It must have sounded strange, indeed, coming from the lips of One Who could multiply things as He would; but He designed to teach His disciples that no creative power should ever supersede careful thrift, that the most prodigal bounty is fitly accompanied by the nicest economy. Obedient to His word the disciples unstrapped the little baskets⁵ which all Jews were wont to carry when travelling from home, and filled them with the fragments; and behold "there was more of what remained over than of the origi-

nal stock." It may have been intended to leave no doubt that a distinct creative act had been performed: that the multitudes had been satisfied, not by any sudden cessation of the cravings of hunger, but by an exercise of preternatural power on the part of Him by Whom "all things were made," and without Whom "was not anything made that was made."

Now it cannot have been accidental that all four Evangelists should have recorded this miracle, and with so much more fulness of detail than is usually met with. There is no apparent reason for such prominence in its primary teaching. S. Hilary says the whole circumstance is a series of types. One or two will suffice for our present consideration. In all⁶ the accounts it has been carefully recorded, with only a slight variety of expression, that after blessing and breaking the bread the Divine Master gave it to the disciples, and "the disciples distributed it to them that were set down."

Those multitudes, collected "out of all cities," foreshadowed the numbers of people who should be gathered into the Catholic Church "out of every nation under heaven." The appearance of our Blessed Lord standing in their midst, and miraculously providing from His Own hand for their

bodily wants, signified the place which He intended to occupy as the Head of the Church, able and willing to supply out of the inexhaustible fulness of His bounty whatsoever men of every clime, and age, and degree, should need for the support of their spiritual life.

The twelve disciples receiving the bread which He had blessed, and distributing it to the people, after they were set down and arranged in convenient groups, were but the first in the line of a duly-appointed and unbroken Ministry, from whom, through all the ages of the Church's history, the separate communities of the One Body were destined to receive the Immortal Food.

And if we may draw a still further analogy, or press that more closely which has already been drawn, we should note the fact that Christ is carefully pointed out as the One Source from Which the supply was taken, though it is not revealed whether the real increase was made in His Own, or in the hands of the Apostles; and yet further, that the bread was given only after the multitude had been taught at His mouth. It is the clearest evidence that the Church must look to Him, and Him alone, as her "stay and support," the Teacher and Feeder of her people. He will feed her in soul and spirit

with His doctrine, and sacramentally with His Own most precious Body and Blood; and though we may grasp the teaching, as the multitudes doubtless were able to do in a measure, we must expect the manner of the continued gift of His Sacramental Body to be shrouded in mystery, in the same way as the method by which the loaves were multiplied was hidden from their eyes.

NOTES.

¹ There were other motives which suggested His leaving Galilee. S. Matt. xiv. 13 specifies the report of the Baptist's death. Common prudence would lead Him to avoid unnecessary danger—S. Matt. x. 23.

² "The Songs of Degrees," viz., Psalms cxx. to cxxxiv., were probably sung by the company on the "goings-up" to the Feasts. Ps. cxxi. was appropriate to their last halt within sight of Jerusalem; Ps. cxxii. to their entrance within the gates of the city.

³ These were a kind of sardine. They were caught in large quantities in the lake, dried and salted, and eaten with bread by the common people. The peculiar word used by S. John—ὄψαριον—indicates local knowledge. Cf. Westcott on the Fourth Gospel, and Edersheim, *Life and Times*, i. 681, 682.

⁴ *πασιαί*—*areolatim*—is usually derived from *πράσον*, a leek or onion. Most commentators (Farrar, Geikie, etc.) have assumed that it was a "flower"-bed, and have seen in it an apt figure for the gay scene. But there is no trace of *πράσον* being used of a flower. Possibly it is a foreign word with the same root as "Pharisee," indicating "separation."

⁵ The "cophinus" was a sort of wicker wallet in which a Jew carried "clean" food on a journey. It was such an indispensable article that in Juvenal's time the Jews were ridiculed for possessing nothing but this and a wisp of hay to serve as a pillow.—Juvenal, Sat. iii. 14.

⁶ In S. John vi. 11 the direct mention of this is omitted in the best mss., but it may be inferred from the general sense, as well as from the *οιεδωκε*, here substituted for *εδωκε* of the other Evangelists.

XXX.

Walking upon the Sea.

S. MARK VI. 45-52.

45. And straightway He constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while He sent away the people. 46. And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray. 47. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. 48. And He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by

them. 49. But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed *it* had been a spirit, and cried out: 50. for they all saw Him, and were troubled. And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. 51. And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52. For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

THE miraculous multiplication of the loaves had produced such an effect upon the multitudes that they believed the long-expected Messiah had come, and were eager "to take Him by force and make Him a king." The crown which they would have offered Him contrasted greatly with that which He knew that He must wear; and though He had vanquished once and for all every temptation to mere earthly greatness, the very presentation of the

S. John
vi. 15.

offer drove Him to seek fresh strength to resist in prayer and communion with the Father.

Stanley,
Sin. and
Palest. 379.

The north-eastern shore of the lake was especially suited for retirement. It is the exact counterpart of the north-western ; and together, it has been well observed, they reflect "that union of energy and rest, of active labour and deep devotion, which is the essence of Christianity, as it was in the life of Him in Whom that union was first taught and shown."

He was then in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida-Julias,¹ on the further side, but before He could obtain the undisturbed solitude which He sought it was necessary to dismiss both the multitudes and His disciples. We may well suppose that those whose enthusiasm had just been so largely kindled would be unwilling to depart, but we are not told of any resistance on their part. With the disciples, however, it was different, for it is said that He "constrained" them to get into the boat : it implies that pressure was necessary to overcome their reluctance. Every consideration must have suggested the propriety of their remaining. He was surrounded by strangers ; the country was bleak and desolate ; the night was fast closing in ; and to do as He bade them was to leave Him without any means of

transport across the lake. But His word was law ; and after remonstrating they did as He commanded them. Could they have foreseen what awaited them they would have been filled with dismay. He Who sees the end from the beginning foresaw it ; but He foresaw also the deliverance, and so bade them go. Their destiny was the other Bethsaida, close to Capernaum, distant some forty² or fifty furlongs—from five to six English miles. S. John
vi. 17.

After their departure Jesus ascended the mountain, and continued a long time in prayer. It was a stormy night, but there was a Paschal moon, and as the clouds broke, and the light fell upon the lake, He saw the disciples in distress from contrary winds. Eight or nine hours had passed, and they had accomplished little more than half their voyage. S. John
vi. 19. It required all their efforts to keep their boat from being driven back by the hurricane, and dashed to pieces on the rugged shore ; but “about the fourth watch,” as S. Mark says, adopting the Roman division of the night, if, as is commonly³ supposed, it differed from the Jewish, Jesus went to them walking upon the sea. Their faith had been sorely tried ; their memories would go back to that other storm on the self-same lake, which He had hushed at the mere bidding of His word : but now for hours He

had left them in peril and danger. Was it a superstitious fear that some mischance had befallen Him, and that death had robbed them for ever of His Presence, that when His Form appeared upon the waters they thought it was a spectre, a ghost from the other world? Was it again to try their faith still further that He "would have passed by them"? But when He heard their cry of terror, He restored their confidence by the reassuring intelligence, "It is I; be not afraid." And no sooner had He entered into the boat than the storm was hushed, and there was a great calm.

S. Mark makes no mention of an incident so full of interest and instruction that it has furnished material both for Christian artists and preachers in every age. The impulsive rush to meet Jesus in the enthusiasm of a new-born conviction, the firm and confident step while all goes well, the sinking and falling away when any cloud of doubt or fear hides from the eyes the sustaining Presence, all have found repeated illustration in the spiritual experience of Christ's disciples, from the time when Peter sprang from the boat and "walked upon the waters," and "began to sink."

The reason for the omission in this Gospel is not far to find. Though the memory of the Apostle's

feelings when the water yielded beneath his weight, and of the loss of confidence that took his eyes off Jesus, was well worthy of record for future generations of wavering Christians, he must have thought that the first bold venture of faith, which led him to do what man had never done before, would far outweigh in the estimation of men his after misgivings, and bring him more honour than shame. And so it was that, in accordance with his invariable rule, he asked S. Mark to pass it by in silence.

After what they had so lately seen of His creative power in feeding the multitudes, we might have expected that such an exhibition of omnipotence would have filled them with awe rather than with wonder and perplexity. But their hearts were slow to grasp the inner meaning of the mighty works which He did, and it never even occurred to them that it was quite natural for One Who could create the loaves and fishes at His will, to control the winds and waves.

It helps us to understand the object for which they were suffered, almost forced, to encounter the terrible perils of that stormy voyage. It was part of the training by which their Lord patiently led them onwards from weak beginnings, compelled to subject them again and again to the same discip-

linary experience, only at each repetition drawing them on to the perception of something higher.

This progressive feature in their training appears, perhaps, nowhere more patent than in the special circumstances of the two storms from which He delivered them. At first sight the points of resemblance seem so numerous and so close that it is not easy to see why both should have been recorded. Closer consideration reveals such important and significant differences that the double narrative becomes full of instruction.

In the first storm it was during daylight; they were near to land; "there were other little ships" crossing the lake at the same time; the danger was of the shortest duration; and Jesus was with them in the boat—asleep, it is true, but still His Presence must have given them some sense of security.

In the second, they had to battle with the hurricane through the hours of night; they were "in the midst of the sea;" they were alone upon the waves; the agony of suspense and peril was prolonged for many hours; and, above all, their Guide and Protector was far away.

In the first miracle Jesus taught them to walk by sight; in the second, to walk by faith.

All was designed in the latter case to lead them

to trust Him, though invisible to the bodily eye, and though He tarried, to wait for Him. It was a preparation for the coming severance, and an assurance that though He would leave them, though He should ascend up far from human sight, He would still remember them in their necessities, and "deliver them out of their distress."

And through the Twelve He would teach the world, that for all who put their trust in Him, when the waters of adversity are high, and the storm of temptation is fierce, even though no mortal eye may see Him, He still, as of old, "treadeth upon the waves of the sea," and "walketh upon the wings of the wind." Ps. civ. 3. He still repeats the comforting assurance, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid:" for "though the waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, yet the Lord Who dwelleth on high is mightier."

NOTES.

¹ Bethsaida-Julias was a village rebuilt and adorned by Philip the Tetrarch, and dignified with the title of a town, called Julias, in honour of the Emperor's daughter. The Tetrarch was buried there.

■ Josephus says the lake was forty furlongs wide, *i.e.* five miles. —Wars, iii. 10. 7. For a further description cf. i. 157.

³ The Jews, it is said, originally divided the night into three watches, but after the establishment of Roman supremacy the number was increased to four, which are all named in S. Mark xiii. 35 in the Authorised Version—even, midnight, cock-crowing, and morning. When S. Peter was put in prison he was intrusted to four quaternions of soldiers, one, that is, for each watch. But in Talm. Bab. Berachoth, 3 b., we find reason to doubt the triple division. It contains a discussion between the chief Editor of the Mishnah and the somewhat older Rabbi Nathan. The former says there were four watches; the latter three, referring to Judges vii. 13, which speaks of the “middle watch.” But he is answered by a comparison of Psalm cxix. 62 with cxix. 148, where the expression “night watches” implies two at least after midnight, and therefore also two before.

XXXI.

Tradition of the Elders.

S. MARK VI. 53-56; VII. 1-8.

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew Him, 55. and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was. 56. And whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole.

VII. 1. Then came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2. And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they

wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. 5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. 7. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

AFTER our Lord had stilled the storm upon the lake He passed over to the other side. The exact point at which He landed is not named, but it was somewhere on the edge of the plain of Gen-

Stanley,
Sin. and
Palest. 382.

nesaret. This was a small tract of country about three miles broad, running inland a little less than twice that distance, but in beauty and fertility it was unsurpassed, and for historic associations it has been designated "the most sacred region of the lake, if not of the world."

Its claim to such an honourable title arose mainly out of the fact that it included Capernaum within its boundaries, the city which was "exalted unto heaven" by the many mighty works which were wrought in it.

It was no sooner known that the Great Healer had come back to their shores than the people of the district hastened to bring their sick to be cured. Wherever He went, alike in town and village, the same sight met Him: the village greens and market-places, and the roads in the less frequented localities, were studded in every direction with the pallets of the sick and diseased, and as He passed among them, some, who had been told what befell the woman with the issue of blood, implored permission to touch "but the border of His garment," and all, "as many as touched Him,¹ were made whole."

It was in the midst of His work of healing in the land of Gennesaret, or shortly after it, that Jesus was called upon to engage in a far less congenial occupa-

tion. The chief rulers at Jerusalem had become alarmed at the influence He appeared to be gaining, and, being dissatisfied with the accounts, which must have reached them, of the complete failure of the Pharisees of Sepphoris² and the Galilean Scribes, to convict Him of breaking the Law, determined to send a deputation of more competent disputants.³

There are indications that they agreed beforehand that the charge to be made against Him should be for a breach of "the tradition of the elders," the gravity of which they had wholly miscalculated. Tradition had gained such a firm hold upon the Jewish mind, and was so constantly mixed up with the life of the nation at this time, that a short history of its nature and origin is almost necessary for a due appreciation of much that is written in the Gospels touching the customs and practice of the Jews.

It was an after-growth of the Captivity, originating not improbably with the Great Synagogue, out of which the Sanhedrim⁴ was developed. The reverence and care for Holy Scripture, revived by Ezra, and fostered by later Scribes, led to the creation of a school of interpreters, whose comments were handed down from generation to generation, and treated with so much honour that the highest

authority was sought for their origin. Some Rabbi, bolder than his predecessors, put forward the theory that God had given to Moses not only the Ten Commandments, but also at the same time a full explanation, even in the minutest detail, of all their applications. This Oral Law, he said, had been revealed by Moses to Aaron and his sons, and the memory of it was cherished and handed on without any loss or diminution in the progress of transmission. As soon as such a view of its origin had gained acceptance with the people, its authority became equally binding upon the conscience with that of the Written Law, and the estimation in which it was held even higher.

In lapse of time it received its interpretation at the hands of the Rabbis, and the disquisitions, illustrations, and additions grew into a great body of doctrine; and after the Jewish motto, "Commit nothing to writing," had been forgotten, these were all combined in a vast collection, under the title of *Gemara*, or *Talmud*.⁵ The publication in writing of the *Mishnah* itself, as the Oral Law was called, had preceded it by two hundred years. It was issued authoritatively by Rabbi Judah, the Holy, at the close of the second century of the Christian era.

There were two familiar sayings among the later

Jews, which enable us to understand how widely traditionalism must have conflicted with the teaching of our Blessed Lord. "The words of the elders," they said, "are of more weight than the words of the prophets;" and, even more startling than this, "The Mosaic Law is as water, the Mishnah as wine, and the Gemara as hippocras." Hippocras was a richly-spiced drink, most highly esteemed.

Lightfoot,
Exercit.
in Matt.
xv. 2.

Now one of the six books into which the Mishnah is divided deals entirely with "Purifications."

It was in a matter relating to this subject that the deputation from the Sanhedrim made a direct attack upon our Lord. Some of them had been present on an occasion when certain of the disciples had eaten bread without the preliminary purification enjoined in the Mishnah. To incur such a defilement was to forfeit all claim to be regarded as a respectable Jew. Indeed it was in their eyes nothing less than an unpardonable offence. It was even said that on one occasion Rabbi Akiba being imprisoned, and allowed only sufficient water to quench his thirst, preferred to die of starvation rather than eat his bread with unwashed hands.

Talm. Bab.
Erubin. 21 b.

One reason why they were so scrupulous about this washing was a strange belief that an evil

Lightfoot,
Exercit.
in S. Matt.
xv. 2.
Talm. Bab.
Yoma, 77 b.
Taaniith
20 b.

spirit⁶ settled upon their hands directly they were defiled, and could only be removed by ablutions.

Talm. Bab.
Sotah, 4 b.
Mishnah,
Yadayim
ii. 2. 3.

The directions for the ceremonial were elaborately laid down. S. Mark refers to them in the words, "The Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not." The translation "oft," founded upon the rendering of the Vulgate, has no other authority, and is obviously untenable as being contrary to fact. They washed only twice, at the outside, before meals.⁷ Once with "the first waters," when the hands were lifted up to let the ablutions run down to the wrist; once with "the second waters," reversing the position, so as to let them run off at the ends of the fingers. The allusion in the passage before us is probably to the former of these, and the right translation of the disputed word should be "by the wrist." For the paraphrastic rendering "diligently," from the idea that the word means "fist," and that rubbing "the fist" of one hand in the hollow of the other indicates force and vigour, the evidence is wholly insufficient, the Mishnah containing no such direction.

Now, one special source of defilement here mentioned was the market-place. No Jew could pass through an Oriental bazaar without coming in contact either with a heathen or some one ceremonially

unclean. The crowd was so great that the most careful precaution might fail to secure him from accidental pollution, and the invariable custom was to wash upon returning home. The word employed for this purification is more literally "baptize themselves;" but as immersion was impossible under the circumstances, and yet further, as the Mishnah nowhere enjoins it, the passage supplies ample justification for our mode of baptizing; it shows that the conditions of that sacred rite are satisfied by affusion.⁸ The Jews guarded still further against defilement through drinking-cups, domestic utensils, and household furniture.

With such religious scruples, it was only to be expected that they would be offended at the apparent carelessness of Jesus and His disciples. They asked Him how it was that they too did not "walk" in the tradition of the elders, and they used the expression advisedly, for "the walking," the Hala-chah,⁹ was the title they gave to the Oral Law which regulated the duties of daily life.

He went back for His answer, as so often, to the declarations of the Old Testament. Some centuries before this, Isaiah had denounced the formalism and hypocrisy of his contemporaries, and the Holy Spirit had so ordered his words that they should describe

Isa. xxix.

13.

even more fully a later generation in which the self-same faults would be more largely developed.

It cannot be too carefully noticed that no condemnation is passed upon these rites of purification in themselves. Had the Pharisees recognised their symbolism and deep moral significance: had Jesus been certain that when they washed their hands they thought of or prayed for purity of heart and life, He would have been the last Person to rebuke them, however much they multiplied external forms and ceremonies. These are useful as stepping-stones to higher things; but the moment they begin to satisfy in themselves they become snares, and lead to superstition.

NOTES.

¹ It is impossible to decide whether the text (Him) or the marginal reading (it) of the Authorised Version be right, because the pronoun is of both genders.

■ Cf. i. 86, 87.

³ According to Westcott and Hort, "which came from Jerusalem, and *had seen*,"—they had previously noticed it. "Cum vidissent," Jerome. Cf. Speaker's Com. *in loc.*

⁴ This is only one of many views, but we think the most probable. The Mishnah refers its origin to the seventy elders associated with Moses, but this was only a temporary institution.

⁵ "Talmud" means doctrine or teaching; "Mishnah," repetition;

"Gemara," perfection or completion. The Mishnah is divided into six Sedarim, or "Orders," on these subjects: 1. Seeds, preceded by Benedictions, etc., *i.e.* "the religio-agrarian laws," for tithes, first-fruits, etc. 2. Festival-times; on Sabbath observance, etc. 3. Women, marriage, divorce, etc. 4. Damages, civil and criminal law, together with the well-known "Sayings of the Fathers." 5. Holy things, on sacrifices, etc. 6. Purifications, on what is clean and unclean. These are all subdivided into Treatises. For a full and interesting account of the whole question, cf. Artt. MIDRASH and MISHNAH, in the Encyclopædia Britannica, by Dr. Schiller-Szinessy.

⁶ Shibta, from a Hebrew root "to sit," was one of the demons "which sits upon men's hands in the night, and if any one touch his food with unwashed hands, that spirit sits upon that food, and there is danger from it."

⁷ There used to be another washing after meals before grace with "the last waters," but this obviously was not alluded to here.

⁸ It is quite true that primarily "dipping" was usually adopted—S. Paul's figure, "buried with him by baptism" implies this,—but the above passage shows that to baptize is merely to pour water on or affuse. Cf. also S. Luke xi. 38.

⁹ Cf. Artt. in the Ency. Brit., *ut supra*.

XXXII.

Further Traditionalism.

S. MARK VII. 9-23.

9. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 11. But ye say, If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, *by* whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. 12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13. making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14. And when He had called all the people unto *Him*, He said unto them, Hearken unto Me every one of you, and understand: 15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him,

those are they that defile the man. 16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17. And when He was entered into *the* house from the people, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him; 19. because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20. And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23. all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

It is in perfect accord with S. Mark's custom that he should notice the mood or temper in which Jesus rebuked the champions of a dead formalism. "Full well ye reject the command-

ment of God." It bespeaks the sarcasm and righteous indignation which He felt and must have expressed, not only by the tone of His voice, but, we may well believe, with a look of withering scorn. He had illustrated their abuse of ceremonial observance by their slavery to the letter, and neglect of the spirit; and then, advancing a step higher, He showed what a pernicious effect traditionalism had in perverting the first principles of morality.

S. Mark
vii. 6.

The Law of God, as delivered to Moses in the Mount, had placed the obligation of children "to honour their parents" in the forefront of man's duty to his neighbour. Its observance was of such momentous consequence that it was made "the first commandment with promise," and the penalty of death was affixed to the breach of it.

Eph. vi. 2.
Exod.
xxi. 17.

Now when God imposed this duty He was only setting His seal to man's natural instincts. The relationship of their offspring to parents is of the very closest kind, and carries with it duties and responsibilities which unassisted Nature is quick to recognise. It is strange that it should have been reserved for God's chosen people not only to pervert this law of natural ethics, but also to violate a commandment especially enjoined upon themselves. The breach arose out of their traditional regulations with regard

to vows, since embodied in an elaborate "Tract" of the Mishnah. From those which involved personal obligation,¹ our Lord selected an example to illustrate the open conflict between their admitted principles and the plain teaching of the Mosaic Code.

Josephus,
Antiq.
iv. 4. 4.

The elders allowed a man to alienate any part or the whole of his property from himself by dedication to God or the Temple service. The common formula by which this was done was this, "It is Korban,"² and the word implied that it was a gift or offering presented to the Lord.

Now cases might not be infrequent where parents, from a variety of causes, became dependent upon their children for support; but if the latter, from any feelings of anger or annoyance, desired to withhold their assistance, they had only to repeat the familiar "Korban" over the special object of parental need; and even in extreme cases, where they wished to be entirely quit of filial obligation once for all, they said that everything which might have been used for their parents' benefit was "Korban." It was this which our Lord selected for special animadversion. The immorality of such conduct was greatly intensified by a practice which could hardly have been originally intended, but

which had been winked at, if not openly allowed, in later times. It suffered a man to delay the actual dedication, so that even after the words of alienation had been spoken, he might still continue to enjoy the so-called "Korban," though the rival claims of the parent were held to be set aside as soon as ever the formula was pronounced. We can well understand, then, how our Lord should rebuke those who could tolerate such flagrant injustice, and declare that such casuistry had struck a nail through the sacred bond, and "made the word of God of none effect."³

Lightfoot,
Exercit. in
Matt. xv. 5.

Unable any longer to endure the thought of their sophistries, He turned abruptly from the Pharisaic disputants. A crowd of people had gathered in the neighbourhood, drawn together no doubt by the importance which a deputation from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem would lend to the discussion, as well as by their natural curiosity. The Pharisees had been openly denounced, and the multitudes must know it, that their confidence in such teachers might be shaken and destroyed. Jesus waited till every one had come within reach of His voice, and then, with a caution both at the beginning and at the end, upon the importance of hearing and laying to heart what He said, condemned Pharisaic externalism by the

sweeping assertion that nothing from without can defile a man. It was the flattest contradiction to their system that could possibly be given, and we can almost see them gnashing their teeth against Him as He turned away with that parting curse upon their creed. The die had been cast, and henceforward there could be not even the semblance of a truce between the adherents of the Old and the followers of the New.

It seems strange that when He entered into the house, the disciples should have asked him the meaning of His words. They saw that there was something deeper than what lay on the surface, for they spoke of His speech as a parable. It seemed to Him next to impossible that they could have failed to comprehend its spiritual significance; that with all their opportunities of discerning His mind, they should have made so little progress that a simple parable like that required explanation. Nevertheless, with that patience and gentleness which characterised His education of them for their future office, after a momentary expression of surprise, He unfolded the true sense of the figure which He had used. There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that a man was defiled by what he ate. The Law had for a special purpose⁴

drawn a distinction between clean and unclean Lev. xx. 24-26. meat, and this affected a man ceremonially, but no food could impart actual defilement. Henceforward, too, He gave them to understand that even ceremonial impurity would be done away. For S. Mark tells us that He made the statement, "Whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man, cannot defile him," . . . "purging⁵ all meats," that is, pronouncing them clean. It may not have conveyed this meaning to His hearers, but if we accept the true reading of the passage, we have the witness of the Spirit that He so intended it. It was an anticipation of the verdict pronounced to S. Peter after the vision of the "great sheet:" "What God Acts x. 15. hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Turning, then, from the ceremonial to the moral, He showed that the only defilement to be feared was that which came from within,—from the heart, which is the very cradle of the affections and lusts. A long catalogue of sins follows,—sins, many of which are commonly called sins of the flesh, but which He Who is able to trace everything to its source assigned to the depravity of the heart and will. At the head of the list He placed the "evil disputings," so fresh in His memory from His S. Matt. xv. 19. encounter with the Pharisees; then adulteries and

1 S. John
iii. 15.

fornications, the outcome of a corrupt imagination; murders, which proceed from anger; thefts and covetousness, from secret promptings to overreach others and gain more than one has a right to; knaveries and fraud; lasciviousness or reckless insolence, which outrages the decencies of life; the malicious glance and slanderous tongue; the proud and haughty bearing which bespeaks the self-centred man; and last in the list, the comprehensive sin of foolishness, which embraces every senseless wicked act. And "all these evil things," the Discerner of the heart and thoughts of man assured His disciples, "come from within, and defile the man."

NOTES.

¹ There were two kinds,—vows of consecration and vows of obligation. The former, when a man devoted anything for the Temple for sacrifice—wine, etc.; the latter, when he vowed to abstain from something which was lawful in itself.

² Korban, derived from a Hebrew word, "to offer to God," "bring to the altar." Konam was perhaps derived from the Latin *census*; but some consider that the Rabbis used it as a distorted form of Korban.

³ The rendering of the Authorised Version loses the force of the words as found in the best mss. They are well rendered in the Revised Version: "If a man shall say . . . ye no longer suffer him . . . making void . . ."

⁴ The reason assigned in Lev. xx. 24-26 is to separate the Jews from other nations as God's peculiar people. "It was to be something in their daily life to remind them of the Covenant which distinguished them from the nations of the world." Cf. Speaker's Com. on Lev. n. xi. 2.

⁵ The reading of the best MSS. is *καθαρίζων*, and is an observation made by the Evangelist, "referring to the intention of the Speaker,"—He spoke thus, cleansing all meats.

XXXIII

The Syrophenician Woman.

S. MARK VII. 24-30.

24. And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but He could not be hid. 25. For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: 26. the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. 27. But Jesus said unto

her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. 28. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29. And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

THIS incident seems to point to a somewhat new departure in our Lord's mission. His ruling maxim had been, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It had not prevented Him from bestowing favour upon such of the heathen as had come in His way. He could hardly have failed to heal some that were sick among the inhabitants of Decapolis; and one instance is left on record of blessings bestowed upon a Roman centurion. He was perfectly familiar with the prophecies

S. Matt.
xv. 24.

S. Matt.
viii. 5.

which foretold that the Gentiles should profit by His coming, that He would be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of His people Israel;" but for manifold reasons He felt that His personal ministry must be circumscribed, and confined within strictly Jewish limits. S. Luke
ii. 32

Now, for the first—for the only—time, He appears to have passed into heathen territory. It has been maintained, however, that He merely approached the confines without overstepping the boundary line. It may be that "Tyre and Sidon" were not only cities, but districts, and that the "coasts" or "borders of Tyre and Sidon" meant nothing more than "the marches" which separated Phenicia from Galilee; but the statement of a later verse, that He went "through Sidon," leads to the more natural conclusion that He did actually set foot upon heathen land.

It is worthy of note, nevertheless, that it was not with the intention of preaching or performing any ministerial work, but mainly in search of privacy and seclusion. He needed rest after His prolonged labours, and He may have felt it prudent also to place Himself, in a time of some special excitement, beyond the reach of Herod's machinations. No sooner had He crossed the frontier than He sought

shelter in a house. To avoid any unnecessary offence to those who accompanied Him, we may conclude that it was that of a Jew; for, though strictly a heathen country, the population had been a mixed one for many centuries.

Judg. i. 32.

The fame of His doings had penetrated those parts, for the scene of His chief miracles was not much above thirty miles distant; and though He expressed His desire to be left undisturbed, "He could not be hid." He was almost immediately discovered by a poor woman, who was in great distress through a terrible affliction which had befallen her child. Her nationality is emphasised by the Evangelists with a variety of expression. She is characterised vaguely as "a Greek," not in the limited sense with which we are most familiar, but as a generic term for non-Jewish people, very much as the Turks and Asiatics adopt the designation of "Frank" for any European. Her personal name has come down through tradition

Sepp. iv. 20.

Winer,
Real-Wörter-
buch, s.
Cananites.

as Justa, and that of her daughter as Bernice. She is called by S. Matthew "a woman of Canaan"—an inhabitant of the region into which those who escaped extermination had been shut up; and the title may have been selected to enhance the loving-kindness of the Lord, not without reference to her inheritance of the ancient malediction, "Cursed be

Gen. ix. 25.

Canaan." She is also called here a Syrophenician by descent, probably to distinguish her from those Libyo-Phenicians¹ in the northern coasts of Africa, whom the fame of Carthage had made so widely known.

She was, no doubt, in religion a heathen, but was possessed by principles which, when called into active exercise by the Great Teacher, served her in better stead than the orthodox creed did not a few of its professors.

She had heard of the fame of Jesus, probably from those "about Tyre and Sidon" who had joined the crowds at Capernaum a year before; S. Mark iii. 8. perhaps they had even told her how the evil spirit had been cast out of the demoniac in the synagogue, and in the fulness of hope and faith she had believed all that she heard; and now that the great Wonder-worker was actually come within reach, she hurried into His Presence, and, despite every hindrance, threw herself at His feet in supplication for mercy. He must have been surprised by the title with which she addressed Him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou S. Matt. xv. 22. Son of David," for it was that which bespoke the Jewish Messiah, the Saviour of the world. But He met her petition by an instantaneous rebuff: "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to

take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." It would have checked the eagerness of most suppliants, but hers was no common faith, and her determination to find relief was only equalled by the soreness of her need. Though there was much that she could not have expected, and for which she was unprepared, in the language that He used, it was not altogether harsh, and she caught at whatever seemed to mitigate it. It is quite possible also that there was something either in the expression of His face or the tone of His voice, which lessened the discouragement.

Lightfoot,
Exercit.
in S. Matt.
xv. 26.

She had often heard her people characterised as "dogs." It was a title by which "the Jews, whose first care it was to hate, to mock, and to curse all besides themselves, disgraced the Gentiles." The noble nature of the dog finds no recognition in the history of the Old or New Testaments.² Among Jews, dogs were regarded as wild, savage, undomesticated animals, which prowled about cities as the scavengers of the streets, with no masters and no homes.

Wood, Bible
Animals, 40.
Ps. lix. 6.

But Jesus, by the use of a diminutive not to be expressed in English,³ softened not a little the harshness of the comparison, implying that the dogs to which He likened them were not excluded from the house.

And the woman, with the instincts of a Gentile, with whom the dog was not only a favourite, but an almost necessary companion, having its place at the domestic hearth, turned it at once into an argument in her favour, and replied, "Yes, Lord"—or if we admit the truer reading—"I accept the position, "for the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."" What she meant to convey must have been something like this: 'I do not deny that the Jews are the first object of Your care and ministration. They are the true children; and I am far from asking that they should ever be superseded in their rightful prerogative; but the very fact that You should speak of their being first fed seems to imply that our turn will come after them, and Your mitigation of the harsh unfeeling by-word, which the Jews adopt, encourages me to persevere in my petition. Let the full board, then—the plentiful bread of grace,—be reserved for the Jewish children; but only let me be as the dog under the table, to partake of the crumbs of mercy and comfort that fall from it.'

Such a pleading as that was irresistible: her prayer was answered, and for that saying, and the greatness of the faith of which it was the expression, her daughter was delivered from her dreadful affliction.

S. Matt.
xv. 28.

The story places before us a pattern of meekness and perseverance rarely equalled. How many, even with privileges of teaching and education to which she was a stranger, would have taken offence at the apparent insult of such a reception as she met with ! But with all the forbearance of the meek and quiet spirit, which disarms opposition, she discerned a smile beneath His frown, and won her petition. How many, again, if not offended and full of resentment, would have turned away discouraged ! To have hoped, as she had done, against hope, and then to have heard that there was One Who could give her relief, and to have flung herself at His feet in the agony of supplication, and to be so received ! Could we have been surprised if despair had taken possession of her, and she had hurried from His Presence ? But faith triumphed over all disappointment, and "her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Whether it was given to her to understand it, we cannot tell ; but the seeming harshness of her Saviour's conduct was but a new revelation of His unfailing love. The same love which, when faith was weak, prompted Him to go forth to meet it, led Him to hold Himself back when faith was strong, that it might be yet further purified and made perfect through trial.

NOTES.

¹ It is supposed by some that the above distinction was not known, and that the true rendering is a Phenician Syrian, as in some copies, *Σύρα Φόλνισσα*. In the LXX. Canaan is translated *Φωνίκη*.

■ The only mention of a dog as a domestic animal among Jews is in Tobit, where Tobias goes forth on a journey to Media, and “the young man’s dog with them.”—Tob. v. 16.

³ The common term of contempt was *κύρες*. Jesus said *κυνάρια*, *catelli*, little dogs, pet dogs.

XXXIV.

The Deaf Man with Stammering Tongue.

S. MARK VII. 31-37.

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. 32. And they bring unto Him one *that was* deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put *His* hand upon him. 33. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue: 34. and looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto

him, EPHPHATHA, that is, Be opened. 35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. 36. And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, *so* much the more a great deal they published *it*; 37. and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

AFTER leaving the borders of Tyre, where He had cured the Syrophenician's daughter, our Lord proceeded to go "through Sidon,"¹ but whether He actually visited the ancient Phenician capital, or only set foot on Sidonian territory, we have no means of deciding. If the latter, He would turn southwards after making a slight circuit, and take the great Roman road direct to Cæsarea Philippi. But if the former, He must have crossed some of the numerous passes of the mountain ranges of Libanus and Hermon into the neighbourhood of

Lange,
Leben Jesu,
in loc.

Damascus. This would take Him through some of the grandest highland scenery of Palestine; and when we recall His love of Nature, so often manifested in His teaching, it affords a strong presumption that He would not be insensible to such a consideration in the selection of His route.

Ritter,
Compar.
Geogr. of
Palestine,
ii. 163, etc.

We are told, moreover, that He came through "the midst of the coasts of Decapolis," which favours the supposition, for Damascus² was one of the chief of those ten allied free cities so designated by the Romans. Though situated within the tetrarchies of Philip and Antipas, they were independent of any authority but that of their provincial governor; and their populations, except so far as enterprising Jews might be tempted there for purposes of trade, were entirely heathen. On the Return from the Captivity the old possessors had been unable to re-conquer them; and the ruins of ancient monuments, among which are temples to numerous Greek divinities, testify to their Pagan worship and customs. It is important to notice this, because it involves our Lord in a larger intercourse with the heathen than is commonly supposed, and makes it by no means improbable that the group of miracles here recorded were wrought upon them, and not upon Jews.

Sepp. iii. 2.

Edersheim,
Life and
Times, ii. 44

At some stage of His journey through these parts they brought to Him "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech." He had not been deaf and dumb from his birth, but had lost the sense of hearing from some unrecorded cause, perhaps a fever or an accident, and this deprivation was followed in time, as usually happens, by a difficulty and indistinctness in speaking.³

What our Lord's motive was in taking him apart from the crowd is by no means obvious.⁴ With our Saviour "a moral dealing was the ultimate end of a physical cure," and this was kept in view in the mode of working it. Possibly, then, it was a symbolical action indicating the necessity of his being separated from his own people, and brought out of heathenism. More probably it was designed to concentrate his attention upon our Lord's Own Person, and quicken his faith to be healed. For the same reason, perhaps, He made use of those manual acts of thrusting His fingers into his ears, and touching his tongue with the spittle,⁵ because He could employ no words to strengthen his confidence. He prepared the man, so to speak, by a foretaste of what was to follow through His intervention; as an old writer has expressed it, "by forcing His fingers into the ears, and moistening the tongue, He testified that

Michaelis
in loc.

Maldonatus,
Com. in
Evangelia.

Grotius,
Annotat.
in loc.

it was He by Whose hand the closed passages could be pierced, and the tongue that clave to the roof of the mouth recover its motive power."

Then followed an upward look to heaven, as well to convince him that it was more than human aid that he was about to receive, as to express His union with the Father. A moment more and He heaved a sigh and uttered a groan of sympathy for the sorrow that is in the world, and the word of authority—a single word—Ephphatha,⁶ broke from His lips. He spake, and it was done.

If we could be quite sure that the man was a Gentile—a native of those Greek-speaking cities—the word would help to the settlement of an open question, whether our Lord usually spoke in the ordinary vernacular of the Jews, or adopted the Greek of the more educated classes. If both languages had been in familiar use by Him, the circumstances of the case would at once have suggested the adoption of Greek rather than Aramaic. It is of little consequence that He could not in either case have been heard by the man himself; the narrative clearly indicates that his friends had drawn near, and were within sound of the Speaker's voice.

Edersheim,
Life and
Times, ii. 47.

But, in whatever language, it was a word of power.

"The channels of hearing"⁷ were unstopped, and, if we accept the reading of the oldest manuscript,⁸ "immediately the string of his tongue was loosed." It is a significant change in the order of words, affording additional proof that it was not a case of congenital deafness. He needed only the restoration of the sense of hearing, to recover the faculty of articulate speech, and "he spake plain."

S. Matt.
viii. 4; ix. 30.
S. Mark
i. 44; v. 43.

The oft-repeated charge was once more given—once more to be disregarded—"that they should tell no man." It seems strange that after what He had done, the mere knowledge of His wishes did not insure obedience; but the instinctive and irrepresible desire following upon the reception of any great blessing, to speak of it to others was too strong for them. It is quite possible that they misunderstood His motives, and set it down to a modest shrinking from the praise and popularity which in their eyes was so well earned, and this misconception gave them an additional impulse to do what their natural inclinations prompted, so "the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it."

S. Matt.
xv. 30.

S. Matthew testifies that it was not the only miracle of the kind, but that multitudes of "lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others," were

healed, so that the amazement of the people knew no bounds; and he concludes with an expression which goes far to confirm the belief that those upon whom the miraculous cures were wrought belonged to the heathen population. "They glorified," he says, "the God of Israel." It would have been wholly inappropriate if applied to Jews.

S. Mark records the exclamations in which their admiration expressed itself, and they carry us back to the utterances of the prophet ages before, and are an unconscious witness to their fulfilment, and to Christ's claim to the Messiahship: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

NOTES.

¹ This is the correct text according to the oldest mss. and Versions. Cf. i. 259.

² There is some difference in the ancient enumerations of the cities. Pliny names Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Conatha, Damascus, and Raphana (H. N. v. 18). He gives the extent of the territory at about one hundred miles long, by sixty broad.

³ *μογιᾶλος* is used in the LXX. for dumb, but etymologically implies merely "difficulty of speech."

⁴ This is the first occasion on which He adopted this course. The only other recorded instance is in the kindred miracle that followed shortly after. Cf. viii. 23.

⁵ There was a belief at the time in the medicinal virtue of saliva. "It is from this action of our Saviour that the Roman Catholics formed their custom of touching with spittle the ears and nostrils of the person to be baptized." Cf. Morison, S. Mark, *in loc.*

⁶ This is the Aramaic form of the Ethpaël imperative. It has been thought that the stress laid on the few Aramaic expressions, such as this, "Talitha cumi," and "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani," is an inference that He usually spoke Greek, but it is hardly a legitimate one.

⁷ ἀκοᾷ, instead of ὠτᾷ, implies the sense rather than the actual organs of hearing.

⁸ The Sinaitic ms.

XXXV.

The Feeding of the Four Thousand.

S. MARK VIII. 1-9.

1. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto *Him*, and saith unto them, 2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3. and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4. And His disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? 5. And He asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they

said, Seven. 6. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people. 7. And they had a few small fishes: and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*. 8. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets. 9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away.

S. AUGUSTINE expressed satisfaction that the providential record of this miracle by Evangelists, who recorded the kindred miraculous feeding of the five thousand, had preserved it from the attacks of hostile critics. But what kept them off in an earlier age has been found to interpose no barrier in these later times, when the credibility of the Gospel narrative is so fiercely assailed.

S. August.
de Consens
Evang.
ii. 50.

De Wette
on S. Matt.
xv. 29.
Schleier-
macher on
S. Luke.
Neander,
Life of
Christ,
287 (Bohn).

This account has been spoken of as “a loose tradition,” or “an ill-remembered reproduction” of the former, but the only ground for the supposition is the surprise of the Apostles, “Whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?” If, it is said, they had seen a similar multitude supernaturally fed, they would have expected a repetition of the same creative act for a corresponding necessity. It is a plausible objection, but admits, as will be seen, of satisfactory explanation. Leaving this for the moment, we turn to a consideration of numerous facts which are wholly in consistent with the suggested theory. Almost all the details of the two narratives are different. The mode of distribution through the agency of the Apostles¹ is the only point in which they exactly agree. Some uncertainty, it is true, hangs round the scene of this miracle, but the most that can be said is, that it was at least in the same neighbourhood as the first. There is no question that that was in a desert adjoining Bethsaida Julias, on the north-eastern side of the lake. It may be inferred that this was wrought on the same coast, for it is said that Jesus had reached the further shore through the midst of Decapolis, and that after the multitudes had been dismissed, He took ship and crossed

over to Magdala² on the Galilean side. There is, however, no evidence to enable us to fix the exact locality.

In all other points and characteristic features there is distinct divergence.

In the earlier miracle the people were Jews, chiefly from the Jewish towns of Capernaum, Tiberias, and Bethsaida, on the western side of the lake, pilgrims preparing to go up to the approaching Passover. In the later they were Gentiles. All the history which immediately precedes is occupied with our Lord's ministry among the semi-heathen population of Decapolis; and an expression of S. Matthew, in describing the effect produced upon them by His miracles, where he says that "they glorified the God of Israel," admits of no other explanation than that they were not Israelites themselves. This, added to their wonder at the sight of His miracles, which would have been unaccountable in the Galileans after a ministry of two years amongst them, leaves little doubt of their non-Jewish nationality.

S. Hilary in
Matt. xv.

S. Matt.
xv. 31.

The time also differed. When the five thousand were fed the Passover was nigh at hand, as S. John says, and it is borne out by the undesigned coincidence that the remaining Evangelists all call atten-

S. John
vi. 4.

tion to the abundance of grass,³ which springs up in Palestine at this time of the year.

Whereas, in describing what took place at the second miracle, there is no such allusion. It is merely said that they sat "on the ground." From the sequence of events several weeks must have elapsed, and, as usually happens in that country, the verdure had dried up and withered, and called for no observation.

There is, moreover, a marked difference preserved throughout all the narratives in the kind of baskets used for gathering up the fragments in the two cases.

In the first, each one of the Twelve unstrapped the wicker wallet which, in accordance with custom, he would take with him on his travels, and filled it with the broken pieces; and this accounts for the number of the baskets corresponding with that of the Apostles. In the second a much larger basket⁴ was used, for on one occasion it served to hold S. Paul when he was let down through a window in the walls of Damascus. It is a noteworthy coincidence that the more capacious basket is found in connection with a prolonged sojourn in a heathen district, when a larger store of "clean" provisions would be required than could be carried in the ordinary *cophinus* or wallet.⁵

Acts ix. 25.

Again, the multitudes in the first miracle were more, and the loaves and fishes fewer in number than in the second; and herein may be found a further and decisive argument against the supposed invention of the latter account. A forger would have reversed the statistics, and made the numbers greater and the provisions smaller in the second case; for nothing could be gained by inventing such a narrative if it did not tend, so to speak, to magnify the wonder-working power of our Lord.

Lastly, there is a striking difference in the results. When the Jewish crowds witnessed that great creative act they were filled with enthusiasm and excitement. The expected Messiah had shown Himself in their midst, and they broke out with the cry, "This is of a truth that Prophet that S. John vi. 14, 15. should come into the world;" and then they were so carried away with the conviction, that nothing would satisfy them till they had tried to "to take Him by force and make Him a king."

The heathen multitude, on the other hand, less excitable, because they had no such expectations, dispersed without any demonstration, when their wants were satisfied and they realised that Jesus was about to depart.

A full consideration, therefore, of the circum-

stances of the second miracle furnishes ample proof of the authenticity of the record, none whatever that it is of spurious origin.

The question of the Apostles, which has supplied the assailants of its credibility with their chief argument, admits of a double solution, either of which will satisfy the requirements of the case. If the multitudes were Gentiles, the Apostles might well have hesitated before concluding that their Master would work such a miracle for them, as He had done for the Jews. There was no lesson harder for them to learn, than that all⁶ alike were eligible for His bounty.

Or again, we may find the explanation in their slowness to believe. It is only another illustration of the proverbial forgetfulness of past mercies. Had not God cleft the rock in the wilderness to satisfy the thirst of the wanderers? Had He not given them quails from heaven? And was it not true that when the fountain dried up, and the pangs of hunger returned, they forgot the past, and in their ingratitude murmured against Him?

Trench on
the Miracles,
378.

It has been well said, "It is only the man of full-formed faith, of a faith which as yet the Apostles did not possess, who argues from the past to the

future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love."

The spiritual teaching to be drawn from the history differs in no way from that which the kindred record supplied, but we may gather an additional fragment of instruction from the words, "So they did eat, and were filled." It is a significant expression in the original, "They were fed to satisfaction." That such a result followed, was the consequence of their being fed by Him alone Who "satisfies the empty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with gladness." There is need to be reminded of this in an age when men are pointed to other sources of satisfaction—to education, to culture, and to refinement, and bidden to find their highest enjoyment in these and suchlike pursuits. If they bear no reference to Him towards Whom all that is noblest and best in Nature and Art is designed to lead us, they will turn out to be but "broken cisterns that hold no water."

There is only one answer to the inquiry, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread?" and it is contained in the words, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." S. John vi. 35.

NOTES.

¹ Cf. i. 229.

² Magdala. The best mss. give Magadan as the name of the place. Possibly it bore both names. The modern El-Mejdil is clearly the representative of the former. The Dalmanutha of S. Mark is not mentioned elsewhere; but it must have been either a town or district on the south-western side of the lake.

³ "The latter rain" fell during the greater part of the month of March, and was followed by a great outburst of spring verdure, which would be most noticeable about the time of the Passover.

⁴ *σπυρίς*, Lat. *sporta*, was a large provision-basket, much used for meals, hence the phrase *δέλπνον ἀπὸ σπυρίδος*. It was perhaps more of the nature of a hamper.

⁵ The miracle of the five thousand took place during a short absence only from Galilean territory. The "cophinus" would contain ample provision for this, but His travels through the towns of Decapolis had occupied a considerable time.

⁶ Cf. the case of the Syrophenician woman. "Send her away," they cried. S. Matt. xv. 23.

XXXVI.

The Demand for a Sign.

S. MARK VIII. 10-21.

10. And straightway He entered into a ship with His disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. 12. And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 13. And He left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14. Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. 15. And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of

the leaven of Herod. 16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread.

17. And when Jesus knew *it*, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. 20. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. 21. And He said unto them, *How is it that* ye do not understand?

OUR Lord had been travelling, if not actually in heathen territory, at least where He had been brought into contact with heathens. The eagerness with which He had been welcomed in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and of Decapolis, was in striking contrast to the reception that awaited Him on His

return to Galilee. No sooner had He landed on the western shore of the lake, in Dalmanutha, which was probably the southern part not far from Magdala, than the Pharisees "came forth" to meet Him. Whether it merely means that they came from the neighbouring cities, such as Tiberias, where they dwelt, or whether it points to a place of waiting, where, it may be, they had watched the progress of His well-known boat approaching, they lost no time in entering into a controversy as soon as He arrived.

S. Mark, "for whom the beginnings of things had a charm," says that they "began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him." The last words leave it quite clear what their object was: they wished to put Him to the test, to incite Him to make an attempt in which they hoped He might fail.

They intimated that they were not satisfied with what they had seen. The miracles of healing might be nothing more than the result of superior medical skill; the dispossession of evil spirits, they had told Him before, they believed to have been effected by Beelzebub. If He wished to establish His Messianic claims above all doubt and suspicion, it behoved Him to give them a sign direct from

heaven, where neither man nor devil could possibly be the moving cause. They would be quite satisfied if He would rain manna from above, or stay the sun in its course, or awake the thunder in a clear sky; any of these would put the question on quite another footing, and they would be the first to believe in Him. But He knew their hypocrisy, and that beneath all their pretended anxiety to be convinced, there lay a dogged determination to shut their eyes to every sign, and close their hearts against Him.

He might have reminded them in so many words that they had the very evidence they asked for; but it may be, having in His mind the preternatural star which had presided over His Birth, and the scene when the very heavens had opened to attest His mission at His Baptism, He told them in irony that all their boasted skill in watching the ever-changing sky, and pretending to be able to forecast sunshine and rain,¹ fair weather and foul, only aggravated their guilt in refusing to discern the signs of the times. No sign, He solemnly assured them, such as they asked should be given, not at least till it would be too late, for when "the sun should be darkened" in open day, they would have rejected Him for ever. No wonder that "He

S. Matt.
xvi. 3.

S. Matt.
xxiv. 29.

sighed deeply in His spirit.”² It may have been in His human shrinking from that fearful hour, when He should hang upon the cross amid supernatural darkness; it must have been as well, out of the depths of an untold pity for hearts that He longed in vain to save. And so, knowing the utter uselessness of complying with their request, as far as they were concerned, and having no temptation to make an ostentatious display of miraculous power for His Own aggrandisement, He quitted their shores, no more to return to do any work amongst them.³

S. Mark
ix. 30.

From Dalmanutha He embarked, and the boat was turned in the direction of the north-east coast. During the voyage nothing was spoken; at least there is no record of any conversation, and the thought of what had occurred may well have filled the heart of Jesus with sadness and gloom. But as soon as they landed, the disciples were troubled by the discovery that, in the hurry and confusion of their sudden departure, they had forgotten to supply themselves with necessary provisions; and while they were discussing what was best to be done, Jesus broke His silence by bidding them “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod.” His mind was full of His late

interview, in which they had exhibited such a complete misapprehension of His mission, and dreading the possibility of its spreading to His disciples, He uttered the warning with a more than usual caution.⁴ Their reply proved that though they did not misapprehend Him, as the Pharisees had done, they were yet slow of understanding, and with little perception of spiritual truths. The mention of leaven suggested at once the conclusion that He had overheard their discussion, and they associated it with their need of bread.⁵ "He tells us," they seem to say, "that if we buy bread from a Pharisee or a Sadducee, the bread would defile us, as it would if we bought it from a Samaritan." And at once He exposed their mistake by recalling the miracles which He had worked in their presence for the supply of food by supernatural power. How could they be perplexed by such a difficulty as this? Then, after eliciting from them the fact that they had forgotten nothing of the external circumstances—the numbers of the people and of the loaves, and the basketsful of fragments that remained over, and even the kind of baskets⁶ which had been used on each occasion—He asked in sorrow of heart, how it was that they had failed so completely to understand the meaning of His acts? If they had learned nothing

Rosenmüller,
Schol.

i. 232.
Lightfoot
in loco.

Geikie,
Life and
Words,
ii. 232.

S. Matt.
xvi. 12.

more from them, they ought at least to have gathered this, that in His Presence there need be no anxious care about bread. S. Mark says no more, but S. Matthew tells us that their understandings were opened, and that they discovered that by "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," He spoke of their doctrine.

NOTES.

¹ The Jews paid great attention to the forecast of weather. They watched the smoke, *e.g.*, at the Feast of Tabernacles. If it turned northward, they expected much rain the following year; if southward, little. Cf. Talm. Bab. Yoma, 21 b.

² Cf. i. 61 n.

³ He did not return to carry on His work. In ch. ix. 30 we find Him there, but only as it were in private; "He would not that any one should know" of His visit.

⁴ The combination of "Take heed, beware," is very expressive.

⁵ There were frequent disputes about the use of leaven, whether *e.g.* heathen leaven, or Cuthæan, were permissible; and Lightfoot says, "The disciples thought that Christ cautioned them concerning the leaven of the Pharisees; but withal they suspected some silent reproof for not bringing bread along with them."

⁶ Cf. i. 232, 280 n.

XXXVII.

The Blind Man at Bethsaida.

S. MARK VIII. 22-26.

22. And He cometh to Bethsaida ; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. 23. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town ; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put *His* hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. 24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. 25. After that He put *His* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up : and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. 26. And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

THIS miracle corresponds closely in many particulars to that of the restoration of "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech,"^{vii. 31.} S. Mark and in parts the description is clothed in the very same language. Both are introduced to the reader in the same way : the scene is laid in the same district :¹ the subjects of the cures are of the same nationality :² and the mode of healing adopted is almost peculiar to these alone.³ One distinguishing feature explains the motive that must have weighed with the Evangelist in preserving the record of both in such close proximity to each other. The point of difference is that in the earlier, as in all other

miraculous restorations, the cure was immediate, in the later it was gradual and progressive.

Of the deaf man it is said, "They bring unto Him one that was deaf, . . . and they beseech Him to put His hands upon him;" of the blind, "They bring a blind man unto Him, and besought⁴ Him to touch him." There is no change of tense in the original, but the parallel is exact.

S. Matt.
viii. 13.
S. Mark
ii. 5; vii. 29.

In both cases it is the friends who intercede. It illustrates a truth that is full of comfort, that Christ was not infrequently influenced as much by the faith of others, as by that of the sick and afflicted themselves. Indeed, it has been said that "the Gospel history almost throughout is a system of relief through the medium of others."

The scene is the eastern side of the lake at Bethsaida Julias.⁵ There is no intimation that Jesus had crossed over to the western shore, but every reason to believe that He had closed His ministry there at the conclusion of His encounter with the delegates from the Sanhedrim. His final direction to the restored man not to go into the town, but to return home, when added to other considerations, points to some city of Decapolis as his native place, and consequently to his heathen origin. He was led apart like the other, not as has

been suggested, that when restored his eyes might rest upon the beauties of Nature in the country, rather than on the works of man in the town, but that, in privacy and undisturbed intercourse with the Great Physician, his wants might be made fully known, and his faith quickened into a more receptive state.

It is one of the most touching pictures in the Bible,—Christ, “the Light of the world,” hand in hand with a man that was blind. Well indeed may it have created surprise that no Christian artist should ever have seized upon the subject, so suggestive alike of exquisite treatment and spiritual teaching! We often wonder how deeply the spectators were touched by what they saw, and whether that “vision of beauty” ever faded from their memory, or remained as a joy for ever.

No sooner had Jesus and the blind man withdrawn from the crowd than He anointed his eyes, and laid His hands upon them, and then inquired of him if sight had returned. The man had not been born blind, so was able to recognise objects; but his vision was as yet imperfect, and in the mist and through the film, the forms of men were magnified and distorted. They looked like trees, but they could not be, for they moved about.⁶ Again

Bengelius
in *loc.*

Isaac
Williams,
Third Year
of the
Ministry.

his eyes were touched by the Divine hand, and immediately he saw clearly,⁷ for every object stood out in plain and well-defined outline.

In the light of the previous miracle, it calls for no further consideration, save in that one particular which separates it from every other. The mode of cure is a parable in act; its teaching is in exact harmony with that enforced by the gradual growth of the corn, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." It is worthy of notice that both have been preserved in this Gospel alone. In opening the eyes of the spiritually blind God is not fettered; "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all." The life of the soul, then, may be developed at once by a sudden crisis, for "with God all things are possible;" but the normal process is according to the analogy of the natural kingdom, or as the restoration of sight to the man at Bethsaida, by gradual and progressive efforts.

If it should be thought that because in the majority of His miracles the effect was immediate, and the cure complete, therefore the same law of proportion should be expected in the restoration of spiritual sicknesses, it must not be forgotten that the direct teaching by parable has infinitely greater

weight than the indirect through act and deed. It is true that there is much to be learned from our Lord's mode of working, as, for instance, in this very miracle the means employed prefigured the human ministries of the Church, and we accept it at once, because it is corroborated by what He taught openly and without reserve. He nowhere^s said, either in sermon or parable, that the sanctification of the heart was a sudden thing, and therefore we refuse to interpret His instantaneous cures as furnishing an illustration for the manner in which this moral and spiritual change is to be sought or obtained.

On the other hand, we have no hesitation in accepting the mode of healing in this particular miracle as a model for the development of the inner life of the soul, because it is in perfect harmony with what He taught in the parables that dealt directly with the subject. It will be an encouragement, in an age of religious revival and excitement, to quiet Christians who are striving by the Holy Spirit and the appointed means of grace to increase in wisdom and stature, not by abnormal growth, but with steady advance from grace to grace till the end is reached.

The Parables of the Leaven, of the Mustard-Seed, and of the gradual growth of the Corn.

NOTES.

¹ All that is certain is that both were in the eastern territory. It has been commonly assumed that the former miracle was wrought close to the Sea of Galilee; but it is an assumption, and has been here treated as such. Cf. i. 266-8.

² Cf. i. 269.

³ The only other recorded instance is that of the blind man restored by having his eyes anointed and washing in the Pool of Siloam—S. John ix. 1-8.

⁴ It is the present tense in both, used, as so often by S. Mark, to make the description more vivid.

⁵ Some have supposed that it was the Galilean Bethsaida, probably from a mistaken idea that Dalmanutha, from which our Lord had just crossed over, was on the eastern shore. On this supposition it has been concluded that He was forbidden to enter the town because of the sins of the inhabitants. "Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!"

⁶ According to the best mss. his exact exclamation was, "I discern men, for as trees I see them walking." Probably it expresses a broken utterance, and might be understood thus: "I notice some men—that is, indistinct like trees—but they cannot be trees, for they are walking about."

⁷ *καὶ διέβλεψεν* is now accepted instead of *καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἀναβλέψαι*, and the meaning is, he saw "the men," which were before indistinct, quite clearly, and "all things" plainly that he looked at afterwards.

⁸ The nearest approach is where the Father brings forth the best robe, and a ring and shoes, for the Prodigal Son on his return (S. Luke xv. 22); but as these were ornaments not of the slave, but of the free, it more probably symbolises "his rehabilitation in Baptismal privileges," which do not carry with them complete sanctification. Cf. Collect for Christmas Day.

XXXVIII.

S. Peter's great Confession.

S. MARK VIII. 27-33.

27. And Jesus went out, and His disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way He asked His disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28. And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29. And He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ. 30. And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him. 31. And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32. And He spake *that* saying openly. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. 33. But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

FROM Bethsaida Julias our Lord, at one of the greatest crises in His ministry, retired from His favourite haunts by the Sea of Galilee, and went northwards through the "coasts" and villages of Cæsarea Philippi. Whether He had visited this place before is not certain, but the interest belonging to the physical features of the country, as well as to its historic associations, was such that He would naturally desire to see it. The situation of

the town is unique, and combines elements of grandeur and beauty in the mighty overhanging Hermon and the rich luxuriant plain watered with the springs of the Jordan. If its identification with Laish or Dan be abandoned, its ancient history is wholly Pagan. Under the name of Panium it obtained notoriety for its sanctuary of the god Pan. In Herodian times it was enlarged by the Tetrarch Philip,¹ and its name changed to commemorate both himself and the Emperor. But its old heathen appellation was soon revived. Paneas became the seat of a Christian bishopric, and the ruins of the place are found in the site of the modern Banias.

It was a turning-point in our Lord's history, and He felt the necessity of undisturbed intercourse with His disciples. He was anxious for an opportunity of talking over with them the progress of events, and ascertaining from their lips the general impression which His works and teaching had made upon the people at large. Two years at least had passed—two-thirds of the appointed time—amply sufficient to enable them to form a decided judgment upon His claims. At first He inquired about the opinions current among those who had in no sense joined His society. What do "the men" say? What do "the multitudes" say about Me? The disciples

Robinson,
iii. 404.

Joseph.
Antiq.
xviii. 2. 1.
Wars, ii.
9. 2.

S. Matt.
xvi. 13.
S. Luke
ix. 18.

had often, no doubt, heard the subject freely canvassed, and they gathered up the floating ideas of His Person into three main convictions.

One party, influenced perhaps by the superstitious Antipas and the Herodians, imagined that He was the murdered Baptist risen from the dead ; another recognised in His wonder-working power the long-expected Elijah ; while a third, impressed by His anxious and sorrowful look, which had deepened so much during the last weeks, as well as from a hope that the lost treasures of the Temple were about to be restored, thought that He was Jeremiah, or "one of the prophets." Such was the popular judgment. ^{2 Macc. ii. 1-7.} ^{S. Matt. xvi. 14.} It was perhaps neither more nor less than He looked for. It showed that He had got hold of the people ; that they were satisfied that He was some "Great One," and that there was considerable diversity in the character of His work, for He had revived the memory of not one merely, but of several of their greatest ; but no real progress had been made towards a general acceptance of His true Mission as the Messiah. The Jews had become so wholly engrossed in the idea that their future Deliverer must restore their political independence, that they had no eye for One Who seemed careless of their national hopes and prejudices, and bent

S. Matt.
xi. 4, 5.

only upon the restoration of spiritual privileges. Even the Baptist had need to be reminded that there were other characteristics of the Messiah than the power of deliverance from the hands of an enemy.

Fully convinced of the fact that, as far as the public at large was concerned, there was no recognition of His Messiahship, He turned to His near companions, with satisfaction, no doubt, but not without anxiety, for "many of His disciples had gone away backwards," and the shock may have been felt by the Twelve; and He asked with an earnest emphasis, "But *you*²—who do you say that I am?" It was a critical moment. There was some excuse for the people. They had only seen Him at intervals; they had witnessed one miracle here, and another there; but the inner circle of disciples had been with Him from the beginning. Had that prolonged training been only labour lost? There was no hesitation in the answer. With characteristic impetuosity, as the mouthpiece of all, confident that none would contradict him, S. Peter broke out into the great confession, "Thou art the Christ."³ It was a noble witness to the truth, and it called forth a blessing upon him who bore it, though with a praiseworthy modesty it is suppressed in the Gospel which was so peculiarly his own.

S. Matt.
xvi. 18, 19.

If we notice here the memorable words by which our Lord followed up His blessing, words round which so much ecclesiastical controversy has gathered, it is not to reopen the unhappy strife, but simply to exemplify once more the custom which He so largely adopted, and which gave to His teaching a freshness unknown to the Rabbis, viz., of seizing His illustrations from the sights by which He was surrounded.

It was, it is almost certain, as He looked upon the gigantic rock crowned with the castle of Subeibeh,⁴ Ritter, unassailable from its strength and position, that He Compar. saw no inapt figure of the solid foundation upon Geography, ii. 199. which His spiritual kingdom was to rest, and turning to the "Rock-man," whom He Himself had named, He said, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock S. Matt. I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall xvi. 18. not prevail against it."

That splendid eulogy was soon to be followed by a severe rebuke ; for the hopes which his confession had kindled, that at least the Apostles realised His Mission, were immediately dashed by the clearest evidence that their chief had wholly misunderstood that the Messiah must be "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

The anticipation of the Cross, which was always present in His mind, had found expression from

S. John
ii. 19;
iii. 14.

S. Matt.
x. 38.

time to time, but only in enigmatical predictions. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." But they were passed by without notice. Jewish ideas at that time hardly admitted of a suffering Messiah; indeed so wholly had the prophecies of His humiliation dropped out of sight, that it has been said that no Rabbi of our Lord's generation had ventured to teach that He must suffer.⁵

The time had arrived when the truth must be revealed "openly," without reserve or disguise, and so "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things," and be publicly rejected by the great council of the nation, and put to death. He did not fail to add that which should have brought them consolation, that though death must be endured He could not be holden of it, but would rise again after three days. But this part of the announcement was wholly lost upon the bewildered Apostle. His ambitious views, and his intense personal love for his Master, made him rebel against the bare possibility of suffering and death, and taking Him aside he remonstrated with Him,

and protested that it must not be. "God forbid! it must not, it shall not happen unto Thee." It was a temptation to Jesus to turn aside from His predestined path. It was an echo of the voice which He had heard in the wilderness at the outset of His Mission, bidding Him exercise His power for His Own deliverance, and it called for a rebuke not a whit less severe.

"Stand not in the way before Me; thou art a stone of stumbling and rock of offence," "Get thee behind Me, Satan,"⁶ for your mind is set on earthly things, you cannot grasp the counsel of the Most High. It is through suffering that I must reign; My Crown can only be won when I have borne the Cross." It sounds harsh to our ears that our Lord should repeat to a misguided but well-intentioned disciple language which He had used to the subtle and malignant Tempter. But he had been blessed in the highest terms for his confession, though our Lord allowed that it could only have been made under the inspiration of God; even so is he most severely rebuked now, though the temptation was recognised by Christ as the suggestion of the Evil One. It was an outspoken reproof calculated to awake him to a consciousness of what he was doing, and by whose influence he was being led; and if we could

S. Matt.
xvi. 17.

read the story of his after-life, it would doubtless testify to his gratitude for the revelation which it made to him of the true nature of the Messiah's Kingdom.

NOTES.

¹ Herod the Great built a temple in honour of Augustus; Philip called it Cæsarea, and added his own name, both for his own honour and to distinguish it from Cæsarea, Turris Stratonis, the well-known sea-port of Palestine. Cf. Joseph. Antiq. xv. 10. 3.

² The position of the pronoun is very emphatic in the Greek :
ὁμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;

³ The Anointed. He received this title as embracing in His Own Person the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, to which men were admitted by unction. Cf. 1 Kings xix. 16; Exod. xl. 15; 1 Sam. x. 1.

⁴ It rises to the height of 1500 feet, and is guarded on all sides by inaccessible gorges. It has been described as "the largest of its kind in the East, and equal in extent even to the pride of European castles at Heidelberg."—Stanley, Sin. and Palest. 397. The origin of the name Subeibeh, given to it in the Crusades, is doubtful.

⁵ Geikie, in a note on *Die Leiden des Messias*, by August Wünsche, has maintained that the extracts from Rabbinic writings, supposed to contradict this theory, are all indecisive. Cf. chap. xlvi. *n. g.*

⁶ It is quite true that "Satan" is used in the Old Testament merely for an "adversary," as, *e.g.*, "Let Satan stand at his right hand," but it is almost impossible to soften the language, which is precisely identical with that used to the Tempter, because S. Peter's suggestion was in spirit an exact echo of his.

XXXIX.

Bearing the Cross.

S. MARK VIII. 34-38.

34. And when He had called the people unto *Him* with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose His life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36. For what shall it profit a man,

if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37. or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

THE connection of Christ's glory with His abasement, which was brought out so strikingly when the confession of His Godhead was followed by the prediction of His Passion, has been very beautifully illustrated in the picture of a great Christian artist.¹ The scene is the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth; the toil of the day is over, the door is open towards the west, when the wearied Son of Man stretches out His arms for a momentary relief. The sun is just setting, and throws His shadow upon the wall—the shadow of a cross. At that instant His Blessed Mother, who is kneeling at a casket con-

taining the gifts of the Wise Men, takes in her hand the crown which they had presented to Him as King, and which she fondly hoped to see Him wear; she lifts up her eyes, and they light upon the dark shadow cast upon the wall.

S. Luke
ii. 35.

Now there can hardly be a doubt that in her heart the future of her Son was thus overclouded. It had been so clearly predicted to her when she took the Babe into the Temple, that the anticipation of the predestined sword must have pierced her soul again and again. But probably the disciples were troubled by no such forebodings till the unreserved declaration of what awaited Him in Jerusalem gave a rude shock to their hopes. The severe rebuke to S. Peter for doubting the certainty of His prediction must have satisfied them that there was no escape. They had then to face the fact that their cherished aspirations, their hopes that all obstacles would soon be overcome, and that they would sit on thrones in His kingdom, were dashed by this new revelation. There was, it is true, an element of consolation in His utterance, but the bare thought that their Master must suffer and die took such complete hold of them that they gave it no consideration.

And then He had a still further disclosure to

make. Not only must He suffer Himself, but a similar fate was in store for them ; and not for them only, but for all who wished to become members of His Church. Self-sacrifice in place of self-pleasing was to be the watchword of His disciples, and, as though to impress upon them that it was a law of universal application, He called the people within the sound of His voice before He proclaimed it. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

It was not altogether a new doctrine. Philosophers had taught men that righteousness is naturally persecuted in a sinful world. Plato had come very near to our Lord when he said that Plato, De Repub ii. 362. "the righteous man will be scourged, tortured, and bound, will have his eyes burned out, and at last, after suffering every kind of ill, will be impaled ² or crucified."

But Jesus advanced a step further when He declared that a man must take up the cross himself. There could be no mistake as to what it implied in its literal meaning. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, but since the Romans had been in possession of Palestine³ the people had become familiarised with it, and must have seen many a condemned criminal bearing the instrument of his death to

the place of execution. In His prevision of the early years of Christianity, our Lord knew that such a death awaited some of those to whom He was speaking. But the broad principle involved in His declaration is that sacrifice is inseparable from the Christian calling.

There is, we know, a wonderful spell in the cry, "Come after me," "Follow me." All history, profane as well as sacred, has shown us this. The great Roman general realised its force when he called to his soldiers, who shrank from the hardships of the Libyan desert, and promised to go before them and to command them nothing which he would not first do himself. Even so Christ designed to help His followers by the assurance that He should first suffer that which they would be called to bear.

In the first of the three arguments brought forward to enforce the principle, some obscurity is caused from the want of one English equivalent for the Greek word translated "life." On His lips it had a double significance—viz., that which we now live in the flesh, and that which we live in union with the life-giving Spirit,—a lower and earthly life, and a higher and heavenly. If, He argues, any man thinks only of the former, and makes everything bend to that, with all its temporal enjoyments and

self-pleasing, he will forfeit all right to the latter. If, however, he learns to sit loosely to that, and is prepared to resign it whenever a strong sense of duty prompts the resignation, he carries in his hand a passport into a higher and nobler existence. "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

That is the first inducement, and the second is not unlike it. It rests upon the vast disproportion between the two lives.

He pictures to His hearers a man placed upon trial for his conduct, and condemned to forfeit⁴ all claim to eternal life, because he has thought only of the present, and taken his fill of its pleasures; and then He weighs in the balance one against the other, what he has gained and what he has lost, and the former flies up at once and kicks the beam, for it is "altogether lighter than vanity itself." The same truth is enforced under another figure. There are many things which may be recovered by ransom or won back by exchange, but eternal life, once forfeited, is past recovery; at least no corruptible things, such as silver and gold, neither "thousands of rams nor ten thousands of rivers of oil," can effect a redemption or offer the least compensation, for "it costs more to

redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever."

His last argument is an appeal to the recompence and requital at the Final Judgment. S. Mark records His reference to the latter alone. It is a call to those who heard Him to break with the spirit of that sinful and adulterous generation, branded with unfaithfulness to their rightful Lord, and not to be ashamed to confess Him openly; for if every man is to be rewarded according to his works, then to be ashamed of Christ before men entailed the fearful requital of being put to shame by Him in the presence of the angels.

S. Matt.
xvi. 27.

It was all perhaps a gloomy outlook, but it was broken by gleams of bright anticipation if only they would have seen them. True, He was destined to die; suffering, humiliation, and shame awaited Him; but this was not the end, for He spoke also of the resurrection and of His return "in the glory of His Father."

And yet once more He promised that some of them would live to see in this life a foretaste of the glory that should follow. Yet forty years and Jerusalem would be destroyed. All the present opposition would be crushed, and men should see in the judgment about to fall upon the

Jews a type and assurance of that which would be consummated at the end of the world ; and not only so, but it would be followed by the establishment of His visible and spiritual kingdom upon earth. The Church was destined to rise out of the ashes of the Temple. Their eyes were to be delighted with a yet nearer vision and manifestation of Divine glory, so soon to be vouchsafed to the inner circle of the Twelve, and it could hardly have been absent from His thoughts while He spake ; but the intimation that all would not survive to witness the coming of His kingdom with power is the clearest proof that He looked beyond the Transfiguration.⁵

NOTES.

¹ Holman Hunt.

² *ἀνασχωδυνεύω*, not elsewhere used, is regarded by lexicographers as equivalent to *ἀνασκοποῖν* and *ἀναστανεῖν*. Cf. Herod. ix. 78.

³ Syria was made a Roman province after the conquest of Pompey, B.C. 64, and Judæa was united with it A.D. 6.

⁴ *ζημιῶ* is a forensic term, to mulct, to amerce, to fine. The Authorised Version, by rendering it here "lose," and in the parallel passage in S. Luke, "be cast away," has missed all that the word implies.

⁵ The assurance would be weak indeed if it referred to an event about to happen six days after. Yet this interpretation has satisfied not a few of the Fathers and others—Origen, SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Theophylact.

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